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HOLLAND

A Dutch Windmill.

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HOLLAND.

BY

EDMONDO DE AMICIS,

AUTHOR OF "SPAIN," "MOROCCO," ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRTEENTH EDITION OF THE ITALIAN BY

HELEN ZIMMERN.

ILLUSTRATED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO

PIETRO GROLIER.

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HOLLAND.

HOLLAND.

One who looks for the first time at a large map of Holland must be amazed to think that a country so made can exist. At first sight, it is impossible to say whether land or water predominates, and whether Holland belongs to the continent or to the sea. Its jagged and narrow coast-line, its deep bays and wide rivers, which seem to have lost the outer semblance of rivers and to be carrying fresh seas to the sea; and that sea itself, as if transformed to a river, penetrating far into the land, and breaking it up into archipelagoes; the lakes and vast marshes, the canals crossing each other everywhere,—all leave an impression that a country so broken up must disintegrate and disappear. It would be pronounced a fit home for only beavers and seals, and surely its inhabitants, although of a race so bold as to dwell there, ought never to lie down in peace.

When I first looked at a large map of Holland these thoughts crowded into my mind, and I felt a great desire to know something about the formation of this singular country; and as what I learned impelled me to make a book, I write it now in the hope that I may lead others to read it.

Those who do not know a country usually ask travellers, "What sort of place is it?"

Many have told briefly what kind of country Holland is.

Napoleon said: "It is an alluvium of French rivers, the Rhine, the Scheldt, and the Meuse," and under this pretext he annexed it to the Empire. One writer defined it as a sort of transition between the earth and the sea. Another calls it "an immense surface of earth floating on the water." Others speak of it as an annex of the old continent, the China of Europe, the end of the earth and the beginning of the ocean—a huge raft of mud and sand; and Philip II. called it "the country nearest hell."

But on one point they were all agreed, and expressed themselves in the same words: Holland is a conquest of man over the sea; it is an artificial country; the Dutch made it; it exists because the Dutch preserve it, and would disappear if they were to abandon it.

To understand these words we must picture to ourselves Holland as it was when the first German tribes, wandering in search of a country, came to inhabit it.

Holland was then almost uninhabitable. It was composed of lakes, vast and stormy as seas, flowing into each other; marshes and morasses, thickets and brushwood; of huge forests, overrun by herds of wild horses; vast stretches of pines, oaks, and alder trees,

in which, tradition tells us, you could traverse leagues passing from trunk to trunk without ever putting your foot to the ground. The deep bays carried the northern storms into the very heart of the country. Once a year certain provinces disappeared under the sea, becoming muddy plains which were neither earth nor water, on which one could neither walk nor sail. The large rivers, for lack of sufficient incline to drain them into the sea, strayed here and there, as if uncertain which road to take, and then fell asleep in vast pools amongst the coast-sands. It was a dreary country, swept by strong winds, scourged by continual rain, and enveloped in a perpetual fog, through which nothing was heard save the moaning of the waves, the roaring of wild beasts, and the screeching of sea-fowl. The first people who had the courage to pitch their tents in it were obliged to erect with their own hands, hillocks of earth as a protection from the inundations of the rivers and the invasions of the ocean, and they were obliged to live on these heights like shipwrecked-men on lonely islands, descending, when the waters withdrew, to seek nourishment by fishing, hunting, and collecting the eggs which the sea-fowl had laid on the sands. Cæsar, when he passed by, gave the first name to this people. The other Latin historians spoke with mingled pity and respect of these intrepid barbarians who lived on "a floating country," exposed to the inclemency of an unfeeling sky and to the fury of the mysterious North

Sea. Imagination can picture the Roman soldiers from the heights of the utmost wave-washed citadels of the empire, contemplating with sadness and wonder the wandering tribes of that desolate country, and regarding them as a race accursed of Heaven.

Now, when we reflect that such a region has become one of the richest, most fertile, and best-governed countries in the world, we understand how justly Holland is called the conquest of man.

But it should be added that it is a continuous conquest.

To explain this fact,—to show how the existence of Holland, notwithstanding the great works of defence built by its inhabitants, still requires an incessant struggle fraught with perils,—it is sufficient to glance rapidly at the greatest changes of its physical history, beginning at the time when its people had reduced it to a habitable country.

Tradition tells of a great inundation of Friesland in the sixth century. From that period catastrophes are recorded in every gulf, in every island, one may say, in almost every town, of Holland. It is reckoned that through thirteen centuries one great inundation, besides smaller ones, has taken place every seven years, and, since the country is an extended plain, these inundations were very deluges. Toward the end of the thirteenth century the sea destroyed part of a very fertile peninsula near the mouth of the Ems and laid waste more than thirty

villages. In the same century a series of marine inundations opened an immense gap in Northern Holland and formed the Gulf of the Zuyder Zee, killing about eighty thousand people. In 1421 a storm caused the Meuse to overflow, and in one night buried in its waters seventy-two villages and one hundred thousand inhabitants. In 1532 the sea broke the embankments of Zealand, destroyed a hundred villages, and buried for ever a vast tract of the country. In 1570 a tempest produced another inundation in Zealand and in the province of Utrecht; Amsterdam was inundated, and in Friesland twenty thousand people were drowned. Other great floods occurred in the seventeenth century; two terrible ones at the beginning and at the end of the eighteenth; one in 1825, which laid waste Northern Holland, Friesland, Over-Yssel, and Gelderland; another in 1855, when the Rhine, overflowing, flooded Gelderland and the province of Utrecht and submerged a large part of North Brabant. Besides these great catastrophes, there occurred in the different centuries innumerable others which would have been famous in other countries, but were scarcely noticed in Holland—such as the inundation of the large Lake of Haarlem caused by an invasion of the sea. Flourishing towns of the Zuyder Zee Gulf disappeared under water; the islands of Zealand were repeatedly covered by the sea and then again left dry; the villages on the coast

from Helder to the mouths of the Meuse were frequently submerged and ruined; and in each of these inundations there was an immense loss of life of both man and beast. It is clear that miracles of courage, constancy, and industry must have been wrought by the Dutch people, first in creating, and then in preserving, such a country.

The enemy against which the Dutch had to defend their country was threefold—the sea, the rivers, and the lakes. The Dutch drained the lakes, drove back the sea, and imprisoned the rivers.

To drain the lakes they called the air to their aid. The lakes and marshes were surrounded with dykes, the dykes with canals and an army of windmills; these, putting the suction-pumps in motion, poured the waters into the canals, which conducted them into the rivers and to the sea. Thus vast areas of ground which were buried under water saw the light, and were transformed, as if by enchantment, into fertile plains covered with villages and traversed by roads and canals. In the seventeenth century, in less than forty years, twenty-six lakes were emptied. In Northern Holland alone at the beginning of this century more than six thousand hectares of land were delivered from the waters, in Southern Holland, before 1844, twenty-nine thousand hectares, and in the whole of Holland, from 1500 to 1858, three hundred and fifty-five thousand hectares. By the use of steam pumps instead of windmills, the

great undertaking of draining the Lake of Haarlem was completed in thirty-nine months. This lake, which threatened the towns of Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Leyden with raging storms, was forty-four kilometers in circumference. At present the Hollanders are contemplating the prodigious enterprise of draining the Gulf of the Zuyder Zee, which covers a space of more than seven hundred square kilometers.

The rivers, another internal enemy of Holland, did not cost less fatigue or fewer sacrifices. Some, like the Rhine, which loses itself in the sand before reaching the ocean, had to be channelled and protected from the tide at their mouths by immense locks; others, like the Meuse, were flanked by large dykes, like those raised to force back the sea; others were turned from their channels. The wandering waters were gathered together, the course of the rivers was regulated, the streams were divided with rigorous precision, and sent in different directions to maintain the equilibrium of the enormous liquid mass,—for the smallest deviation might cause the submersion of whole provinces. In this manner all of the rivers, which originally wandered unrestrained, swamping and devastating the whole country, have been reduced to streams and have become the servants of man.

But the fiercest struggle of all was the battle with the ocean. Holland, as a whole, lies lower than the sea-level; consequently, wherever the coast is

not defended by downs it had to be protected by embankments. If these huge bulwarks of earth, wood, and granite were not standing like monuments to witness to the courage and perseverance of the Dutch, it would be impossible to believe that the hand of man, even in the course of many centuries, could have completed such an immense work. In Zealand alone the dykes extend over an area of four hundred kilometers. The western coast of the island of Walcheren is protected by a dyke, the cost of whose construction and preservation put out at interest would, it is calculated, have amounted to a sum great enough to have paid for the building of the dyke of solid copper. Round the town of Helder, at the northern extremity of Northern Holland, there is a dyke made of blocks of Norwegian granite which is ten kilometers long and stretches sixty meters into the sea. The province of Friesland, which is eighty-eight kilometers long, is protected by three rows of enormous palisades sustained by blocks of Norwegian and German granite. Amsterdam, all the towns on the coast of the Zuyder Zee, and all the islands which have been formed by fragments of the land that has disappeared, forming a sort of circle between Friesland and Northern Holland, are protected by dykes. From the mouths of the Ems to the mouths of the Scheldt, Holland is an impenetrable fort, in whose immense bastions the mills are the towers, the locks the gates, the islands the advanced forts; of which, like a real for-

tress, it shows to its enemy, the sea, only the tips of its steeples and the roofs of its buildings, as though in derision or in challenge.

In truth, Holland is a fortress, and the Dutch live as though they were in a fort—always in arms against the sea. A host of engineers, dependent on the minister of the interior, is scattered throughout the land, disciplined like an army. These men are continually on the alert, watching over the waters of the interior, anticipating the rupture of the dykes, ordering and directing the works of defense. The expenses of this warfare are distributed: one part is paid by the state, the other by the provinces; every proprietor pays, besides the general imposts, a special tax on the dykes in proportion to the extent of his property and to its proximity to the waters. Any accidental breach, any carelessness, may cause a flood: the danger is ever present. The sentinels are at their posts on the ramparts, and at the first attack of the sea, give the war-cry, whereupon Holland sends out arms, materials, and money. And even when great battles are not in progress, a slow, noiseless struggle is ever going on. Innumerable windmills, even in the drained lakes, are continually working to exhaust the rain-water and the water that oozes from the earth, and to pump it into the canals. Every day the locks of the gulfs and rivers shut their gigantic doors in face of the high tide, which attempts to launch its billows into the heart of the

country. Work is continually going on to reinforce any weakened dykes, to fortify the downs by cultivation, to throw up fresh embankments where the downs are low—works towering like immense spears brandished in the midst of the sea, ready to break the first onset of the waves. The sea thunders eternally at the doors of the rivers, ceaselessly lashes their banks, roars forth its eternal menace, raises the crests of its billows curious to behold the contested ground, heaps banks of sand before the doors to destroy the commerce of the cities it wishes to possess; wastes, rasps, and undermines the coasts, and, unable to overthrow the ramparts, against which its impotent waves break in angry foam, it casts ships laden with corpses at the feet of the rebellious country to testify to its fury and its strength.

Whilst this great struggle continues Holland is becoming transformed. A map of the country as it was eight centuries ago would not at first sight be recognized. The land is changed, the men are changed. The sea in some parts has driven back the coast; it has taken portions of the land from the continent, has abandoned and again retaken it; has reunited some of the islands to the continent by chains of sand, as in Zealand; has detached the borders of the continent and formed of them new islands, such as Wieringen; has withdrawn from some provinces, and has converted maritime cities into inland towns, as at Leeuwarden; it has changed vast

plains into archipelagoes of a hundred isles, such as the Bies-Bosch; it has separated the city from the land, as at Dordrecht. New gulfs two leagues wide have been formed, such as the Gulf of Dollart; two provinces have been separated by a new sea—namely, North Holland and Friesland. Inundations have caused the level of the ground to be raised in some places, lowered in others; unfruitful soil has been fertilized by the sediment of the overflown rivers; fertile ground has been changed into deserts of sand. The transformations of the waters have given rise to a transformation of labor. Islands have been joined to the continent, as was the island of Ameland; whole provinces are being reduced to islands, as is the case with North Holland, which will be separated from South Holland by the new canal of Amsterdam; lakes as large as provinces have been made to disappear, like the Lake of Beemster. By the removal of the thick mud, land has been converted into lakes, and these lakes are again transformed into meadows. So the country changes, ordering and altering its aspect in accordance with the violence of the waters and the needs of man. As one glances over the latest map, he may be sure that in a few years, it will be useless, because at the moment he is studying it, there exist bays which will disappear little by little, tracts of land which are on the point of detaching themselves from the continent, and large canals which will open and carry life into uninhabited regions.

But Hollanders did more than defend themselves from the water; they became its masters. The water was their scourge; it became their defence. If a foreign army invades their territory, they open the dykes and loose the sea and the rivers, as they loosed them on the Romans, the Spanish, and the army of Louis XIV., and then defend the inland towns with their fleets. Water was their poverty; they have made it riches. The whole country is covered with a network of canals, which irrigate the land and are at the same time the highways of the people. The towns communicate with the sea by means of the canals; canals lead from town to town, binding the towns to the villages, and uniting the villages themselves, as they lie with their homesteads scattered over the plain. Smaller canals surround the farms, the meadows, and the kitchen-gardens, taking the place of walls and hedges; every house is a little port. Ships, barges, boats, and rafts sail through the villages, wind round the houses, and thread the country in all directions, just as carts and carriages do in other places.

And here, too, Holland has accomplished many gigantic works, such as the William Canal in North Brabant, which, more than eighty kilometers long and thirty meters wide, crosses the whole of Northern Holland and unites Amsterdam to the North Sea: the new canal, the largest in Europe, which will

join Amsterdam to the ocean, across the downs, and another, equally large, which will unite the town of Rotterdam to the sea. The canals are the veins of Holland, and the water is its blood.

But, aside from the canals, the draining of the lakes, and the works of defence, as one passes rapidly through Holland he sees on every side indications of marvellous labor. The ground,—in other countries the gift of nature,—is here the result of industry. Holland acquired the greater part of its riches through commerce, but the earth had to yield its fruits before commerce could exist; and there was no earth—it had to be created. There were banks of sand, broken here and there by layers of peat, and downs which the wind blew about and scattered over the country; large expanses of muddy land, destined, as it seemed, to eternal barrenness. Iron and coal, the first elements of industry, were lacking; there was no wood, for the forests had already been destroyed by storms before agriculture began; there was neither stone nor metal. Nature, as a Dutch poet has said, had denied all its gifts to Holland, and the Dutch were obliged to do everything in spite of her. They began by fertilizing the sand. In some places they made the ground fruitful by placing on it layers of soil brought from a distance, just as a garden is formed; they spread the rubble from the downs over the sodden meadows; they mixed bits of the peat

taken from the water with the earth that was too sandy; they dug up clay to give a fresh fertility to the surface of the ground; they strove to till the downs; and thus, by a thousand varied efforts, as they continually warded off the threatening waters, they succeeded in cultivating Holland as highly as other countries more favored by Nature. The Holland of sands and marshes, which the ancients considered barely habitable, now sends abroad, year by year, agricultural products to the value of a hundred million francs, possesses about a million three hundred thousand head of cattle, and may be rated in proportion to its size among the most populous countries in Europe.

Now, it is obvious that in a country so extraordinary the inhabitants must be very different from those of other lands. Indeed, few peoples have been more influenced by the nature of the country they inhabit, than the Dutch. Their genius is in perfect harmony with the physical character of Holland. When one contemplates the memorials of the great warfare which this nation has waged with the sea, one understands that its characteristics must be steadfastness and patience, conjoined with calm and determined courage. The glorious struggle, and the knowledge that they owe everything to themselves, must have infused and strengthened in them a lofty sense of their own dignity and an indomitable spirit

of liberty and independence. The necessity for a continual struggle, for incessant work, and for continual sacrifices to protect their very existence, confronts them perpetually with realities, and must have helped to make them an extremely practical and economical nation. Good sense necessarily became their most prominent quality; economy was perforce one of their principal virtues. This nation was obliged to excel in useful works, to be sober in its enjoyments, simple even in its greatness, and successful in all things that are to be attained by tenacity of purpose and by activity springing from reflection and precision. It had to be wise rather than heroic, conservative rather than creative; to give no great architects to the edifice of modern thought, but many able workmen, a legion of patient and useful laborers. By virtue of these qualities of prudence, phlegmatic activity, and conservatism the Dutch are ever advancing, although step by step. They acquire slowly, but lose none of their acquisitions;—they are loth to quit ancient usages, and, although three great nations are in close proximity to them, they retain their originality as if isolated. They have retained it through different forms of government, through foreign invasions, through the political and religious wars of which Holland was the theatre—in spite of the immense crowd of foreigners from every country who have taken refuge in their land, and have lived there at all times. They are, in short, of all the northern

nations, that one which has retained its ancient typical character as it advanced on the road toward civilization. One recalling the conformation of this country, with its three and a half millions of inhabitants, can easily understand that although fused into a solid political union, and although recognizable amongst the other northern nations by certain traits peculiar to the inhabitants of all its provinces, it must nevertheless present a great variety. Such, indeed, is the case. Between Zealand and Holland proper, between Holland and Friesland, between Friesland and Gelderland, between Groningen and Brabant, although they are closely bound together by local and historical ties, there is a difference as great as that existing between the most distant provinces of Italy and France. They differ in language, in costume and in character, in race and in religion. The communal *régime* has impressed on this nation an indelible stamp, because nowhere else has it so conformed to the nature of things. The interests of the country are divided into various groups, of whose organization the hydraulic system is an example. Hence association and mutual help against the common enemy, the sea, but freedom of action in local institutions. The monarchical *régime* has not extinguished the ancient municipal spirit, which frustrated the efforts of all those great states that tried to absorb Holland. The great rivers and deep gulfs serve both as commercial roads which constitute a national bond

Dutch Fishing Boats.

KW6

between the various provinces, and as barriers which defend their ancient traditions and provincial customs. In this land, which is apparently so uniform, one may say that everything save the aspect of nature changes at every step—changes suddenly, too, as does nature itself, to the eye of one who crosses the frontier of this state for the first time.

But, however wonderful the physical history of Holland may be, its political history is even more marvellous. This little country, invaded first by different tribes of the Germanic race, subdued by the Romans and by the Franks, devastated by the Danes and by the Normans, and wasted for centuries by terrible civil wars,—this little nation of fishermen and merchants preserved its civil freedom and liberty of conscience by a war of eighty years' duration against the formidable monarchy of Philip II., and founded a republic which became the ark of salvation for the freedom of all peoples, the adopted home of the sciences, the exchange of Europe, the station of the world's commerce; a republic which extends its dominion to Java, Sumatra, Hindostan, Ceylon, New Holland, Japan, Brazil, Guiana, the Cape of Good Hope, the West Indies, and New York; a republic that conquered England on the sea, that resisted the united armies of Charles II. and of Louis XIV., that treated on terms of equality with the greatest nations, and for a time was one of the three powers that ruled the destinies of Europe.

It is no longer the grand Holland of the eighteenth century, but it is still, next to England, the greatest colonizing state of the world. It has exchanged its former grandeur for a quiet prosperity; commerce has been limited, agriculture has increased; the republican government has lost its form rather than its substance, for a family of patriotic princes, dear to the people, govern peaceably in the midst of the ancient and the newer liberties. In Holland are to be found riches without ostentation, freedom without insolence, taxes without poverty. The country goes on its way without panics, without insurrections,—preserving, with its fundamental good sense, in its traditions, customs, and freedom, the imprint of its noble origin. It is perhaps amongst all European countries that nation in which there is the best public instruction and the least corruption. Alone, at the extremity of the continent, occupied with its waters and its colonies, it enjoys the fruits of its labors in peace without comment, and can proudly say that no nation in the world has purchased freedom of faith and liberty of government with greater sacrifices.

Such were the thoughts that stimulated my curiosity one fine summer morning at Antwerp, as I was stepping into a ship that was to take me from the Scheldt to Zealand, the most mysterious province of the Netherlands.

ZEALAND.

ZEALAND.

If a teacher of geography had stopped me at some street-corner, before I had decided to visit Holland, and abruptly asked me, "Where is Zealand?" I should have had nothing to say; and I believe I am not mistaken in the supposition that a great number of my fellow-citizens, if asked the same question, would find it difficult to answer. Zealand is somewhat mysterious even to the Dutch themselves; very few of them have seen it, and of those few the greater part have only passed through it by boat; hence it is mentioned only on rare occasions, and then as if it were a far-off country. From the few words I heard spoken by my fellow-voyagers, I learned that they had never been to the province; so we were all equally curious, and the ship had not weighed anchor ere we entered into conversation, and were exciting each other's curiosity by questions which none of us could answer.

The ship started at sunrise, and for a time we enjoyed the view of the spire of Antwerp Cathedral, wrought of Mechlin lace, as the enamoured Napoleon said of it.

After a short stop at the fort of Lillo and the village of Doel, we left Belgium and entered Zealand.

In passing the frontier of a country for the first time, although we know that the scene will not change suddenly, we always look round curiously as if we expect it to do so. In fact, all the passengers leaned over the rail of the boat, that they might be present when the apparition of Zealand should suddenly be revealed.

For some time our curiosity was not gratified: nothing was to be seen but the smooth green shores of the Scheldt, wide as an arm of the sea, dotted with banks of sand, over which flew flocks of screaming sea-gulls, while the pure sky did not seem to be that of Holland.

We were sailing between the island of South Beveland and the strip of land forming the left bank of the Scheldt, which is called Flanders of the States, or Flemish Zealand.

The history of this piece of land is very curious. To a foreigner the entrance of Holland is like the first page of a great epic entitled, The Struggle with the Sea. In the Middle Ages it was nothing but a wide gulf with a few small islands. At the beginning of the sixteenth century this gulf was no longer in existence; four hundred years of patient labor had changed it into a fertile plain, defended by embankments, traversed by canals, populated by villages, and known as Flemish Zealand. When the war of

independence broke out the inhabitants of Flemish Zealand, opened their dykes rather than yield their land to the Spanish armies: the sea rushed in, again forming the gulf of the Middle Ages, and destroying in one day the work of four centuries. When the war of independence was ended they began to drain it, and after three hundred years Flemish Zealand once more saw the light, and was restored to the continent like a child raised from the dead. Thus in Holland lands rise, sink, and reappear, like the realms of the Arabian Nights at the touch of a magic wand. Flemish Zealand, which is divided from Belgian Flanders by the double barrier of politics and religion, and from Holland by the Scheldt, preserves the customs, the beliefs, and the exact impress of the sixteenth century. The traditions of the war with Spain are still as real and living as the events of our own times. The soil is fertile, the inhabitants enjoy great prosperity, their manners are severe; they have schools and printing-presses, and live peacefully on their fragment of the earth which appeared but yesterday, to disappear again on that day when the sea shall demand it for a third burial. One of my fellow-travellers, a Belgian lady, who gave me this information, drew my attention to the fact that the inhabitants of Flemish Zealand were still Catholics when they inundated their land, although they had already rebelled against the Spanish dominion, and consequently it occurred,

strangely enough, that the province went down Catholic and came up Protestant.

Greatly to my surprise, the boat, instead of continuing down the Scheldt, and so making the circuit of the island of South Beveland, entered the island, when it reached a certain point, passing through a narrow canal that crosses or rather cuts the island apart, and so joins the two branches of the river that encircles it. This was the first Dutch canal through which I had passed: it was a new experience. The canal is bordered on either side by a dyke which hides the country. The ship glided on stealthily, as if it had taken some hidden road in order to spring out on some one unawares. There was not a single boat in the canal nor a living soul on the dykes, and the silence and solitude strengthened the impression that our course had the hidden air of a piratical incursion. On leaving the canal we entered the eastern branch of the Scheldt.

We were now in the heart of Zealand. On the right was the island of Tholen; on the left, the island of North Beveland; behind, South Beveland; in front, Schouwen. Excepting the island of Walcheren, we could now see all the principal islands of the mysterious archipelago.

But the mystery consists in this—the islands are not seen, they must be imagined. To the right and left of the wide river, before and behind the ship, nothing was to be seen but the straight line of the

embankments, like a green band on a level with the water, and beyond this streak, here and there, were tips of trees and of steeples, and the red ridges of roofs that seemed to be peeping over to see us pass. Not one hill, not one rise in the ground, not one house, could be discovered anywhere: all was hidden, all seemed immersed in water; it seemed that the islands were on the point of sinking into the river, and we glanced stealthily at each other to make sure we were still there. It seemed like going through a country during a flood, and it was an agreeable thought that we were in a ship. Every now and then the vessel stopped and some passengers for Zealand got into a boat and went ashore. Although I was eager to visit the province, I nevertheless regarded them with a feeling of compassion, imagining that those unreal islands were only monster whales about to dive into the water at the approach of the boats.

The captain of our ship, a Hollander, stopped near me to examine a small map of Zealand which he held in his hand. I immediately seized the opportunity and overwhelmed him with questions. Fortunately, I had hit upon one of the few Dutchmen who, like us Italians, love the sound of their own voices.

"Here in Zealand, even more than in other provinces," said he, as seriously as if he were a master giving a lesson, "the dykes are a question of life and death. At high tide all Zealand is below sea-

level. For every dyke that were broken, an island would disappear. The worst of it is, that here the dykes have to resist not only the direct shock of the waves, but another power which is even more dangerous. The rivers fling themselves toward the sea,—the sea casts itself against the rivers, and in this continual struggle undercurrents are formed which wash the foundations of the embankments, until they suddenly give way like a wall that is undermined. The Zealanders must be continually on their guard. When a dyke is in danger, they make another one farther inland, and await the assault of the water behind it. Thus they gain time, and either rebuild the first embankment or continue to recede from fortress to fortress until the current changes and they are saved."

"Is it not possible," I asked, introducing the element of poetry, "that some day Zealand may no longer exist?"

"On the contrary," he replied, to my sorrow: "the day may come in which Zealand will no longer be an archipelago, but terra firma. The Scheldt and the Meuse continually bring down mud, which is deposited in the arms of the sea, and, rising little by little, enlarges the islands, thus enclosing the towns and villages that were ports on the coast. Axel, Goes, Veer, Arnemuyden, and Middelburg were maritime towns, and are now inland cities. Hence the day will surely come in which the waters

of the rivers will no longer pass between the islands of Zealand, and a network of railways will extend over the whole country, which will be joined to the continent, as has already happened in the island of South Beveland. Zealand grows in its struggle with the sea. The sea may gain the victory in other parts of Holland, but here it will be worsted. Are you familiar with the arms of Zealand: a lion in the act of swimming, above which is written, '*Luctor et emergo*'?"

After these words he remained silent for some moments, while a passing glance of pride enlivened his face: then he continued with his former gravity:

"*Emergo*, but he did not always emerge. All the islands of Zealand, one after the other, have slept under the waters for longer or shorter periods of time. Three centuries ago the island of Schouwen was inundated by the sea, when all the inhabitants and cattle were drowned and it was reduced to a desert. The island of North Beveland was completely submerged shortly after, and for several years nothing was to be seen but the tips of the church-steeples peeping out of the water. The island of South Beveland shared the same fate toward the middle of the fourteenth century,—the island of Tholen suffered in the year 1825 of our century,—the island of Walcheren in 1808, and in the capital of Middelburg, although it is several miles distant from the coast, the water was up to the roofs."

As I listened to these stories of the water, of inundations and submerged districts, it seemed strange to me that I myself was not drowned. I asked the captain what sort of people lived in those invisible countries, with water underfoot and overhead.

"Farmers and shepherds," he answered. "We call Zealand a group of forts defended by a garrison of farmers and shepherds. Zealand is the richest agricultural province in the Netherlands. The alluvial soil of these islands is a marvel of fertility. Few countries can boast such wheat, colza, flax, and madder as it produces. Its people raise prodigious cattle and colossal horses, which are even larger than those of the Flemish breed. The people are strong and handsome; they preserve their ancient customs, and live contentedly in prosperity and peace. Zealand is a hidden paradise."

While the captain was speaking the ship entered the Keeten Canal, which divides the island of Tholen from the island of Schouwen, and is famous for the ford across which the Spanish made their way in 1575, just as the eastern side of the Scheldt is famous for the passage they forced in 1572. All Zealand is full of memories of that war. Because of its intimate connection with William of Orange, the hereditary lord of a great part of the land in the islands, and by reason of the impediments of every kind that it could oppose to invaders, this little archipelago of sand, half buried in the sea, became

the theatre of war and heresy, and the duke of Alva longed to possess it. Consequently terrible struggles raged on its shores, signalised by all the horrors of battles by land and sea. The soldiers forded the canals by night in a dense throng, the water up to their throats, menaced by the tide, beaten by the rain, with volleys of musketry pouring down the banks, their horses and artillery swallowed in the mud, the wounded swept away by the current or buried alive in the quagmires. The air resounded with German, Spanish, Italian, and Flemish voices. Torches illuminated the great arquebuses, the pompous plumes, the strange, blanched faces. The battles seemed to be fantastic funerals. They were, in fact, the funerals of the great Spanish monarchy, which was slowly drowned in Dutch waters, smothered with mud and curses. One who is weak enough to feel an excessive tenderness for Spain need only go to Holland if he wishes to do penance for this sin. Never, perchance, have there been two nations which have had better reasons than these to hate each other with all their strength, or which tried with greater fury to establish those reasons. I remember, to mention one alone of a thousand contrasts, how it impressed me to hear Philip II. spoken of in terms so different from those used in the Pyrenees a few months before. In Spain his lowest title was *the great king:* in Holland they called him a *cowardly tyrant.*

The ship passed between the island of Schouwen

and the little island of St. Philipsland, and a few moments later entered the wide branch of the Meuse called Krammer, which divides the island of Overflakkee from the continent. We seemed to be sailing through a chain of large lakes. The distant banks presented the same appearance as those of the Scheldt. Dykes stretched as far as the eye could see, and behind the dykes appeared the tops of trees, the tips of steeples, and the roofs of houses, which were hidden from view, all lending the landscape an air of mystery and solitude. Only on some projection of the banks which formed a gap in the immense bulwarks of the island peeped forth, as it were, a sketch of a Dutch landscape—a painted cottage, a windmill, a boat—which seemed to reveal a secret created to arouse the curiosity of travellers, and to delude it directly it was aroused.

Suddenly, on approaching the prow of the ship, where were the third-class passengers, I made a most agreeable discovery. Here was a group of peasants, men and women, dressed in the costume of Zealand—I do not remember of which island, for the costume differs in each, like the dialect, which is a mixture of Dutch and Flemish, if one may so speak of two languages that are almost identical. The men were all dressed alike. They wore round felt hats trimmed with wide embroidered ribbons; their jackets were of dark cloth, close fitting, and so short as hardly to cover their hips, and left open to show

a sort of waistcoat striped with red, yellow, and green, which was closed over the chest by a row of silver buttons attached to one another like the links of a chain. Their costume was completed by a pair of short breeches of the same color as the jacket, tied round the waist by a band ornamented by a large stud of chiselled silver,—a red cravat, and woollen stockings reaching to the knee. In short, below the waist their dress was that of a priest, and above it, that of a harlequin. One of them had coins for buttons, and this is not an unusual practice. The women wore very high straw hats in the form of a broken cone, which looked like overturned buckets, bound round with long blue ribbons fluttering in the wind; their dresses were dark-colored, open at the throat, revealing white embroidered chemisettes; their arms were bare to the elbow; and two enormous gold earrings of the of the most eccentric shape projected almost over their cheeks. Although in my voyage I tried to imitate Victor Hugo in admiring everything as a savage, I could not possibly persuade myself that this was a beautiful style of dress. But I was prepared for incongruities of this sort. I knew that we go to Holland to see novelty rather than beauty, and good things rather than new ones, so I was predisposed to observe rather than to be enthusiastic. If that first impression was not very pleasant to my artistic taste, I consoled myself by the thought that doubtless all those peasants could

read and write, and that possibly on the previous evening they had learned by heart a poem of their great poet, Jacob Catz, and that they were probably on their way to some agricultural convention of which the programme was in their pockets, where with arguments drawn from their modest experience they would confute the propositions of some scientific farmer from Goes or Middelburg. Ludovico Guicciardini, a Florentine nobleman, the author of an excellent work on the Netherlands printed in Antwerp in the sixteenth century, says that there was hardly a man or woman in Zealand who did not speak French or Spanish, and that a great many spoke Italian. This statement, which was perhaps an exaggeration in his day, would now be a fable, but it is certain that amongst the rural inhabitants of Zealand there exists an extraordinary intellectual culture, far superior to that of the peasants of France, Belgium, Germany, and many other provinces of Holland.

The ship rounded the island of Philipsland, and we found ourselves outside of Zealand.

Thus this province, mysterious before we entered it, seemed doubly so when we had quitted it. We had traversed it and had not seen it, and we left it with our curiosity ungratified. The only thing we had perceived was that Zealand is a country hidden from view. But one is deceived who thinks it is mysterious for the sole reason that it is invisible

—everything in Zealand is a mystery. First of all,—How was it formed? Was it a group of tiny alluvial islands, uninhabited and separated only by canals, which, as some believe, met and formed larger islands? Or was it, as others think, terra firma when the Scheldt emptied itself into the Meuse? But, even leaving its origin out of the question, in what other country in the world do things happen as they happen in Zealand? In what other country do the fishermen catch in their nets a siren whose husband, after vain prayers to have her restored, in vengeance throws up a handful of sand, prophesying that it will bury the gates of the town—and lo his prophecy is fulfilled? In what other country do the souls of those lost at sea come as they come to Walcheren, and awaken the fishermen with the demand that they be conducted to the coasts of England? In what other country do the sea-storms fling, as they do on the banks of the island of Schouwen, carcasses borne from the farthest north—monsters half men, half boats, mummies bound in the floating trunks of trees, of which an example is still to be seen at the guildhall of Zierikzee? In what country, as at Wemeldingen, does a man fall head foremost into a canal, where, remaining under water an hour, he sees his dead wife and children, who call to him from Paradise, and is then drawn out of the water alive, whereupon he relates this miracle to Victor Hugo,

who believes it and comments on it, concluding that the soul may leave the body for some time and then return to it? Where, as near Domburg, at low water is it possible to draw up ancient temples and statues of unknown deities? In what other place does the sword of a Spanish captain, Mondragone, serve as a lightning-conductor, as at Wemeldingen? In what other country are unfaithful women made to walk naked through the streets of the town with two stones hung round the neck and a cylinder of iron on the head, as in the island of Schouwen? Now, really, this last marvel is no longer seen, but the stones still exist, and any one can see them in the guildhall at Brauwershaven.

Our ship now entered that part of the southern branch of the Meuse called Volkerak. The scene was just the same—dykes upon dykes, the tips of houses and church-steeples, a few boats here and there. One thing only was changed, the sky. I then saw for the first time the Dutch sky as it usually appears, and witnessed one of those battles of light peculiar to the Netherlands—battles which the great Dutch landscape-artists have painted with insuperable power. Previously the sky had been serene. It was a beautiful summer day: the waters were blue, the banks emerald green, the air warm, with not a breath of wind stirring. Suddenly a thick cloud hid the sun, and in less time than it takes to tell it everything was as different as if the season, the hour, and

the latitude had all been changed in a moment. The waters became dark, the green of the banks grew dull, the horizon was hidden under a gray veil; everything seemed shrouded in a twilight which made all things lose their outline. An evil wind arose, chilling us to the bone. It seemed to be December; we felt the chill of winter and that restlessness which accompanies every sudden menace on the part of nature. All round the horizon small leaden-colored clouds began to collect, scudding rapidly along, as though searching impatiently for a direction and a shape. Then the waters began to ripple, and became streaked with rapid luminous reflections, with long stripes of green, violet, white, ochre, black. Finally this irritation of nature ended in a violent downpour, which confused sky, water, and earth in one gray mass, broken only by a lighter tone caused by the far-off banks, and by some sailing ships, which came into view here and there like upright shadows on the waters of the river.

"Now we are really in Holland," said the captain of the ship, approaching a group of passengers who were contemplating the spectacle. "Such sudden changes of scene," he continued, "are never seen anywhere else."

Then, in answer to a question from one of us, he ran on:

"Holland has a meteorology quite her own. The winter is long, the summer short, the spring is only

the end of the winter, but nevertheless, you see, every now and then, even during the summer, we have a touch of winter. We always say that in Holland the four seasons may be seen in one day. Our sky is the most changeable in the world. This is the reason why we are always talking of the weather, for the atmosphere is the most variable spectacle we have. If we wish to see something that will entertain us, we must look upward. But it is a dull climate. The sea sends us rain on three sides: the winds break loose over the country even on the finest days; the ground exhales vapors that darken the horizon; for several months the air has no transparency. You should see the winter. There are days when you would say it would never be fine again: the darkness seems to come from above like the light; the north-east wind brings us the icy air from the North Pole, and lashes the sea with such fury and roaring that it seems as though it would destroy the coasts." Here he turned to me and said, smiling, "You are better off in Italy." Then he grew serious and added, "However, every country has its good and bad side."

The boat left the Volkerak, passed in front of the fortress of Willemstadt, built in 1583 by the Prince of Orange, and entered Hollandsdiep, a wide branch of the Meuse which separates South Holland from North Brabant. All that we saw from the ship was a wide expanse of water, two dark stripes to the

right and left, and a gray sky. A French lady, breaking the general silence, exclaimed with a yawn,

"How beautiful is Holland!"

All of us laughed excepting the Dutch passengers.

"Ah, captain," began a little old Belgian, one of those pillars of the coffee-house who are always thrusting their politics in the faces of their fellows, "there is a good and a bad side to every country, and we Belgians and Dutchmen ought to have been persuaded of this truth, and then we should have been indulgent toward each other and have lived in harmony. When one thinks that we are now a nation of nine millions of inhabitants,—we with our industries and you with your commerce, with two such capitals as Amsterdam and Brussels, and two commercial towns like Antwerp and Rotterdam, we should count for something in this world, eh, captain?"

The captain did not answer. Another Dutchman said:

"Yes, with a religious war twelve months in the year."

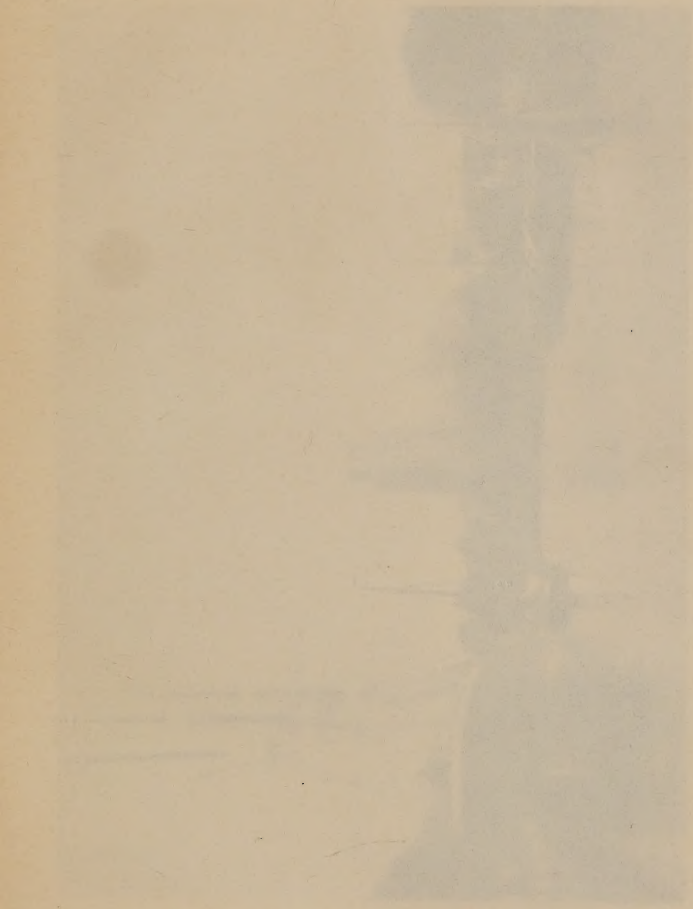
The little old Belgian, somewhat put out, now addressed his remarks to me in a low tone: "It is a fact, sir. It was stupid, especially on our part. You will see Holland. Amsterdam is certainly not Brussels; it is as flat and wearisome a country as can well be; but as to prosperity it is far beyond us. Assure yourself that they spend a florin, which is

two and a half francs, where we spend a franc. You will see it in your hotel bills. They are twice as rich as we are. It was all the fault of William the First, who wished to make a Dutch Belgium and has pushed us to extremes. You know how it happened" —and so on.

In Hollandsdiep we began to see big barges, small-fishing-boats, and some large ships that had come from Hellevoetsluis, an important maritime port on the right bank of the Haringvliet, a branch of the Meuse, near its mouth, where nearly every vessel from India stops. The rain ceased. The sky, gradually, unwillingly, became serene, and on a sudden the waters and the banks were clothed once more in fresh glowing colors: it was summer again.

In a little while the vessel reached the village of Moerdyk, where one of the largest bridges in the world is to be seen.

It is an iron structure a mile and a half long, over which passes the railway to Dordrecht and Rotterdam. From a distance it looks like fourteen enormous edifices put in line across the river: each one of the fourteen high arches supporting the tracks is in truth a huge edifice. In passing over it, as I did a few months later on my return to Holland, I saw nothing but sky and water, so wide is the river at this point, and I felt almost afraid the bridge might suddenly come to an end, and plunge the train into the water.



Dordrecht—Canal with Cathedral in the Distance.

The boat turned to the left, passing in front of the bridge, and entered a very narrow branch of the Meuse called Dordsche Kil, which had dykes on either side, and hence looked more like a canal than a river. It was already the seventh turn we had made since we crossed the frontier.

Passing down the Dordsche Kil, we began to see signs of the proximity of a large town. There were long rows of trees on the banks, bushes, cottages, canals to the right and left, and much moving of boats and barges. The passengers became more animated, and here and there were heard exclamations of "Dordrecht! we shall see Dordrecht." All seemed preparing themselves for some extraordinary scene.

The spectacle was not long delayed, and was extraordinary indeed.

The boat turned for the eighth time, to the right, and entered the Oude Maas or Old Meuse.

In a few moments the first houses of the suburbs around Dordrecht came into view. It was a sudden apparition of Holland, a gratification of our curiosity immediate and complete, a revelation of all the mysteries which were tormenting our brains: we seemed to be in a new world.

Immense windmills with revolving arms were to be seen on every side; houses of a thousand extraordinary shapes were dotted along the banks: some were like villas, others like pavilions, kiosks, cottages, chapels, theatres,—their roofs red, their

walls black, blue, pink, and gray, their doors and windows encircled with white borders like drifts of snow. Canals little and big were leading in every direction; in front of the houses and along the canals were groups and rows of trees; ships glided among the cottages and boats were moored before the doors; sails shone in the streets—masts, pennons, and the arms of windmills projected in confusion above the trees and roofs. Bridges, stairways, gardens on the water, a thousand corners, little docks, creeks, openings, crossways on the canals, hiding-places for the boats, men, women, and children passing each other on the ways from the river to the bank, from the canals to their houses, from the bridges to the barges, —all these made the scene one of motion and variety. Everywhere was water,—color, new forms, childish figures, little details, all glossy and fresh,—an ingenuous display of prettiness—a mixture of the primitive and the theatrical, of grace and absurdity, which was partly European, partly Chinese, partly belonging to no land,—and over all a delightful air of peace and innocence.

So Dordrecht flashed upon me for the first time, the oldest and at the same time the freshest and brightest town of Holland, the queen of Dutch commerce in the Middle Ages—the mother of painters and scholars. Honored in 1572 by the first meeting within its walls of the deputies of the United Provinces, it was also at different times the seat of

memorable synods, and was particularly famous for that meeting of the protestant theologians in 1618, the Ecumenical Council of the Reformation, which decided the terrible religious dispute between Arminians and Gomarists, established the form of national worship, and gave rise to that series of disturbances and persecutions which ended with the unfortunate murder of Barneveldt and the sanguinary triumph of Maurice of Orange. Dordrecht, because of its easy communication with the sea, with Belgium, and with the interior of Holland, is still one of the most flourishing commercial towns of the United Provinces. To Dordrecht come the immense supplies of wood which are brought down the Rhine from the Black Forest and Switzerland—the Rhine wines, the lime, the cement and the stone; in its little port there is a continual movement of snowy sails and of smoking steamers, while little flags bring greetings from Arnhem, Bois-le-Duc, Nimeguen, Rotterdam, Antwerp, and from all their mysterious sisters in Zealand.

The boat stopped for a few minutes at Dordrecht, and I unexpectedly observed near by a number of fresh little cottages which were purely Dutch, and which aroused in me the greatest desire to land and make their acquaintance. But I conquered my curiosity by the thought that at Rotterdam I should see many such sights. The boat started, turned to the left (it was the ninth turning), and entered a

narrow branch of the Meuse called De Noord, one of the numerous threads of that inextricable network of the waters which covers Southern Holland.

The captain approached me as I was looking for him to explain the position of Dordrecht on the map, for it seemed to me very singular. In fact, it is singular. Dordrecht is situated at the extremity of a piece of ground separated from the continent, and forming in the midst of the land an island crossed and recrossed by numerous streams, some of which are natural, some the work of man, rivers made half by man, half by nature—a bit of Holland encircled and imprisoned by the waters, like a battalion overcome by an army. It is bounded on the four sides by the river Merwede, the ancient Mosa, the Dordsche Kil, and the archipelago of Bies-Bosch, and is crossed by the New Merwede, a large artificial water-course. The imprisonment of this piece of land on which Dordrecht lies is an episode in one of the great battles fought by Holland with the waters. The archipelago of Bies-Bosch did not exist before the fifteenth century. In its place there was a beautiful plain covered with populous villages. During the night of the 18th of November, 1431, the waters of the Waal and the Meuse broke the dykes, destroyed more than seventy villages, drowned almost a hundred thousand souls, and broke up the plain into a thousand islands, leaving in the midst of this ruin one upright tower

called Merwede House, the ruins of which are still visible. Thus was Dordrecht separated from the continent, and the archipelago of Bies-Bosch made its appearance, which, as though to show its right of existence, provides hay, reeds, and rushes to a little village which hangs like a swallow's nest on one of the neighboring dykes. But this is not all that is remarkable in the history of Dordrecht. Tradition relates, many believe, and some uphold, that at the time of this remarkable inundation Dordrecht —yes, the whole town of Dordrecht, with its houses, mills, and canals—made a short journey, like an army moving camp; that is to say, it was transported from one place to another with its foundations intact: in consequence whereof the inhabitants of the neighboring villages, coming to the town after the catastrophe, found nothing where it had been. One can imagine their consternation. This prodigy is explained by the fact that Dordrecht is founded on a stratum of clay, which had slipped on to the mass of turf which forms the basis of the soil. Such is the story as I heard it.

Before the vessel left the Noord Canal the hope of seeing my first Dutch sunset was disappointed by another sudden change in the weather. The sky was obscured, the waters became livid, and the horizon disappeared behind a thick veil of mist.

The ship entered the Meuse, and turned for the tenth time, to the left. At this point the Meuse is

very wide, as it carries away and imprisons the waters of the Waal, the largest branch of the Rhine, and the waters of the Leck and Yssel also empty themselves into it. Its banks are flanked on either side by long rows of trees, and are dotted with houses, workshops, manufactories, and arsenals, which grow thicker as Rotterdam is approached.

However little acquainted one may be with the physical history of Holland, the first time one sees the Meuse and thinks of its memorable overflowings, of the thousand calamities and innumerable victims of that capricious and terrible river, one regards it with a sort of uneasy curiosity, much as one looks at a famous brigand. The eye rests on the dykes with a feeling almost of satisfaction and gratitude, as on the brigand when he is safely handcuffed and in the hands of the police.

While my eyes were roving in search of Rotterdam, a Dutch passenger told how, when the Meuse is frozen, the currents, coming unexpectedly from warmer regions, strike the ice that covers the river, break it, upheave enormous blocks with a terrific crash, and hurl them against the dykes, piling them in immense heaps which choke the course of the river and make it overflow. Then begins a strange battle. The Dutch answer the threats of the Meuse with cannonade. The artillery is called out, volleys of grape-shot break the towers and barricades of ice which oppose the current, into a storm of splinters

and briny hail. "We Hollanders," concluded the passenger, "are the only people who have to take up arms against the rivers."

When we came in sight of Rotterdam it was growing dark and drizzling. Through the thick mist I could barely see a great confusion of ships, houses, windmills, towers, trees, and moving figures on dykes and bridges. There were lights everywhere, It was a great city different in appearance from any I had seen before, but fog and darkness soon hid it from my view. By the time I had taken leave of my fellow-travellers and had gathered my luggage together, it was night. "So much the better," I said getting into a cab. "I shall see for the first time a Dutch city by night; this must indeed be a novel spectacle." In fact, Bismarck, when at Rotterdam, wrote to his wife that at night he saw "phantoms on the roofs."

ROTTERDAM.

ROTTERDAM.

One cannot learn much about Rotterdam by entering it at night. The cab passed directly over a bridge that gave out a hollow sound, and while I believed myself to be—and, in fact, was—in the city, to my surprise I saw on either side a row of ships which were soon lost in the darkness. When we had crossed the bridge we drove along streets brightly lighted and full of people, and reached another bridge, to find ourselves between other rows of ships. So we went on for some time, from bridge to street, from street to bridge. To increase the confusion, there was everywhere an illumination such as I had never seen before. There were lamps at the corners of the streets, lanterns on the ships, beacons on the bridges, lights in the windows, and smaller lights under the houses,—all of which were reflected by the water. Suddenly the cab stopped in the midst of a crowd of people. I put my head out of the window, and saw a bridge suspended in mid-air. I asked what was the matter, and some one answered that a ship was passing. In a moment we were again on our way, and I had a peep at a tangle of

canals crossing and recrossing each other, and of bridges that seemed to form a large square full of masts and studded with lights. Then, at last, we turned a corner and arrived at the hotel.

The first thing I did on entering my room was to examine it to see if it sustained the great fame of Dutch cleanliness. It did indeed; and this was the more to be admired in a hotel, almost always occupied by a profane race, which has no reverence for what might be called in Holland the worship of cleanliness. The linen was white as snow, the windows were transparent as air, the furniture shone like crystal, the walls were so clean that one could not have found a spot with a microscope. Besides this, there was a basket for waste paper, a little tablet on which to strike matches, a slab for cigar-ashes, a box for cigar-stumps, a spittoon, a boot-jack, in short, there was absolutely no excuse for soiling anything.

When I had surveyed my room, I spread the map of Rotterdam on the table, and began to make my plans for the morrow.

It is a singular fact that the large towns of Holland have remarkably regular forms, although they were built on unstable land and with great difficulty. Amsterdam is a semicircle, the Hague is a square, Rotterdam an equilateral triangle. The base of the triangle is an immense dyke, protecting the town from the Meuse, and known

as the Boompjes, which in Dutch means little trees,—the name being derived from a row of elms that were planted when the embankment was built, and are now grown to a great size. Another large dyke, dividing the city into two almost equal parts, forms a second bulwark against the inundations of the river, extending from the middle of the left side of the triangle to the opposite angle. The part of Rotterdam which lies between the two dykes consists of large canals, islands, and bridges: this is the modern town; the other part, lying beyond the second dyke, is the old town. Two large canals extend along the other two sides of the city up to the vertex, where they join and meet a river called the Rotte, which name, prefixed to the word *dam*, meaning dyke, gives Rotterdam.

When I had thus performed my duty as a conscientious traveller, and had observed a thousand precautions against defiling, even with a breath, the spotless purity of that jewel of a room, I entered my first Dutch bed with the timidity of a country bumpkin.

Dutch beds—I am speaking of those to be found in the hotels—are usually short and wide, with an enormous eider-down pillow which would bury the head of a cyclops. In order to omit nothing, I must add that the light is generally a copper candlestick as large as a plate, which might hold a torch, but contains instead a short candle as thin as the little finger of a Spanish lady.

In the morning I dressed in haste, and ran rapidly down stairs.

What streets, what houses, what a town, what a mixture of novelties for a foreigner,—a scene how different from any to be witnessed elsewhere in Europe!

First of all, I saw Hoog-Straat, a long straight roadway running along the inner dyke of the city.

Most of the houses are built of unplastered brick, ranging in color through all the shades of red from black to pink. They are only wide enough to give room for two windows, and are but two stories in height. The front walls overtop and conceal the roofs, running up and terminating in blunted triangles surmounted by gables. Some of them have pointed façades, some are elevated in two curves, and resemble a long neck without a head; others are indented step-fashion, like the houses children build with blocks; others look like conical pavilions; others like country churches; others, again, like puppet-shows. These gables are generally outlined with white lines and ornamented in execrable taste; many have coarse arabesques painted in relief on plaster. The windows, and the doors too, are bordered with broad white lines; there are other white lines between the different stories of the houses; the spaces between the house- and shop-doors are filled in with white woodwork; so all along the street white and dark red are the only colors to be seen. From a distance all

the houses produce an effect of black trimmed with strips of linen, and present an appearance partly festal, partly funereal, leaving one in doubt whether they enliven or depress. At first sight I felt inclined to laugh: it seemed impossible that these houses were not playthings and that serious people could live inside them. I should have said that after the fête for which they had been constructed they must disappear like paper frames built for a display of fireworks.

While I was vaguely regarding the street I saw a house which amazed me. I thought I must be mistaken: I looked at it more closely,—looked at the houses near it, compared them with the first house and then with each other, and even then I believed that it was an optical illusion. I turned hastily down a side street, and still I seemed to see the same thing. At last I was persuaded that the fault was not with my eyes, but with the entire city.

All Rotterdam is like a city that has reeled and rocked in an earthquake, and has still remained standing, though apparently on the verge of ruin.

All the houses—the exceptions in each street are so few they can be counted on one's fingers—are inclined more or less, and the greater number lean so much that the roof of one projects half a meter beyond that of the next house if it happens to be straight or but slightly inclined. The strangest part of it all is, that adjoining houses lean in different

directions; one will lean forward as if it were going to topple over, another backward, some to the right, others to the left. In some places, where six or seven neighboring houses all lean forward, those in the middle being most inclined, they form a curve, like a railing that is bent by the pressure of a crowd. In some places two houses which stand close together bend toward each other, as if for mutual support. In certain streets for some distance all the houses lean sideways, like trees which the wind has blown one against the other; then again, they all lean in the opposite direction, like another row of trees bent by a contrary wind. In some places there is a regularity in the inclination, which makes the effect less noticeable. On certain crossways and in some of the smaller streets there is an indescribable confusion, a real architectural riot, a dance of houses, a disorder that seems animated. There are houses that appear to fall forward, overcome by sleep; others that throw themselves backward as if in fright; some lean toward each other till their roofs almost touch, as if they were confiding secrets; some reel against each other as though tipsy; a few lean backward between others that lean forward, like malefactors being dragged away by policemen. Rows of houses seem to be bowing to church-steeples; other groups are paying attention to one house in their centre, and seem to be plotting against some palace. I will soon let you into the secret of all this.

Ян Вотерлоо.

In Rotterdam.

VAN MEURS & STUF
TOEBIJSTUIN, Nr 38
DORDRECHT

But it is neither the shape of the houses nor their inclination that seemed to me the most curious thing about them.

One must observe them carefully, one by one, from top to bottom, and in their diversity they are as interesting as a picture.

In some of the houses, in the middle of the gable, at the top of the façade, a crooked beam projects, fitted with a pulley and a piece of cord to raise and lower buckets or baskets. In others, a stag's, sheep's, or goat's head looks down from a little round window. Under this head there is a line of white-washed stones or a wooden beam which cuts the façade in two. Below the beam there are two large windows, shaded by awnings like canopies, under which hang little green curtains, over the upper panes of the window. Under the green curtain are two white curtains, draped back to reveal a swinging bird-cage or a hanging basket full of flowers. Below this flower-basket screening the lower window-panes there is a frame with a very fine wire netting, which prevents pedestrians from looking into the rooms. Behind the wire netting, in the divisions between the netting and the framework of the window, there are tables ornamented with china, glass, flowers, statuettes and other trifles. On the stone sills of windows which open into the street there is a row of little flower-pots. In the middle or at one side of the window-sill there is a curved iron hook which sup-

ports two movable mirrors joined like the backs of a book, surmounted by a third movable glass, so arranged that from within the house one can see everything that happens in the street without one's self being seen. In some houses a lantern projects between the windows. Below the windows is the house-door or shop-door. If it be a shop-door, there will be carved above it either a negro's head with the mouth wide open or the smirking face of a Turk. Sometimes the sign is an elephant, a goose, a horse's head, a bull, a serpent, a half-moon, a windmill, and sometimes an outstretched arm holding some article that is for sale in the shop. If it be a house-door—in which case it is always kept closed—it bears a brass plate on which is written the name of the tenant, another plate with an opening for letters, and a third plate on the wall holding the bell-handle. The plates, nails, and locks are all kept shining like gold. Before the door there is frequently a little wooden bridge—for in many houses the ground floor is made lower than the street—and in front of the bridge are two small stone pillars surmounted by two balls; below these stand other pillars united by iron chains made of large links in the shape of crosses, stars, and polygons. In the space between the street and the house are pots of flowers. On the window-seats of the basement, hidden in the hollow, are more flowers and curtains. In the less frequented streets there are bird-cages

on either side of the windows, boxes full of growing plants, clothes and linen hung out to dry. Indeed, innumerable articles of varied colors dangle and swing about, so that it all seems like a great fair.

But without quitting the old town one need only walk toward its outskirts in order to see novel sights at every step.

In passing through certain of the straight, narrow streets one suddenly sees before him, as it were, a curtain that has fallen and cut off the view. It is immediately withdrawn, and one perceives that it is the sail of a ship passing down one of the canals. At the foot of other streets a network of ropes seems to be stretched between the two end houses to stop the passage. This is the rigging of a ship that is anchored at one of the docks. On other streets there are drawbridges surmounted by long parallel boards, presenting a fantastic appearance, as though they were gigantic swings for the amusement of the light-hearted people living in these peculiar houses. Other streets have at the foot windmills as high as a steeple and black as an ancient tower, turning and twisting their arms like large wheels revolving over the roofs of the neighboring houses. Everywhere, in short, among the houses, over the roofs, in the midst of the distant trees, we see the masts of ships, pennons, sails, and what not, to remind us that we

are surrounded by water, and that the city is built in the very middle of the port.

In the mean time, the shops have opened and the streets have become animated.

There is a great stir of people, who are busy, but not hurried: this absence of hurry distinguishes the streets of Rotterdam from those of certain parts of London, which, from the color of the houses and the serious faces of the citizens, remind many travellers of the Dutch city. Faces white and pale—faces the color of Parmesan cheese—faces encircled by hair flaxen, golden, red, and yellowish—large shaven faces with beards below the chin—eyes so light that one has to look closely to see the pupil—sturdy women, plump, pink-cheeked, and placid, wearing white caps and earrings shaped like corkscrews,—such are the first things one observes in the crowd.

But my curiosity for the present was not aroused by the people. I crossed Hoog-Straat and found myself in new Rotterdam.

One cannot decide whether it is a city or a harbor, whether there is more land than water, or whether the ships are more numerous than the houses.

The town is divided by long, wide canals into many islands, which are united by drawbridges, turning bridges, and stone bridges. From both sides of each canal extend two streets, with rows of trees on the side next to the water and lines of houses on

the opposite side. Each of these canals forms a port where the water is deep enough to float the largest vessels, and every one of them is full of shipping throughout its length, a narrow space being kept clear in the middle which serves as a thoroughfare for the vessels. It seems like a great fleet imprisoned in a town.

I arrived at the hour of greatest activity, and took my stand on the highest bridge of the principal crossway.

Thence I could see four canals, four forests of ships, flanked on either side by eight rows of trees.

The streets were encumbered with people and merchandise. Droves of cattle passed over the bridges, which were being raised and swung to let the ships pass. The moment they closed or lowered again fresh crowds of people, carriages, and carts passed over them. Ships as fresh and shining as the models in a museum passed in and out of the canals, carrying on their decks the wives and children of the sailors, while smaller boats glided rapidly from ship to ship. Customers thronged the shops. Servants were washing the walls and windows. This busy scene with all its movement was made yet more cheerful by its reflection in the water,—by the green of the trees, the red of the houses, by the high windmills, whose black tops and white wings were outlined against the blue sky, and still more by an air of repose and simplicity never seen in any other northern town.

I examined a Dutch ship attentively.

Almost all of the vessels which are crowded in the canals of Rotterdam sail only on the Rhine and in Holland. They have only one mast, and are broad and strongly built. They are painted in various colors like toy boats. The planks of the hull are generally of a bright grass green, ornamented at the edge by a white or bright-red stripe, or by several stripes which look like broad bands of different colored ribbons. The poop is usually gilded. The decks and the masts are varnished and polished like the daintiest drawing-room floor. The hatches, the buckets, the barrels, the sailyards and the small planks are all painted red, and striped with white or blue. The cabin in which the families of the sailors live is also colored like a Chinese joss-house; its windows are scrupulously clean, and are hung with white embroidered curtains tied with pink ribbons. In all their spare moments the sailors, the women, and the children are washing, brushing, and scrubbing everything with the greatest care; and when their vessel makes its exit from the port, all bright and pompous like a triumphal car, they stand proudly erect on the poop and search for a mute compliment in the eyes of the people who are gathered along the canal.

Passing from canal to canal, from bridge to bridge, I arrived at the dyke of the Boompjes, in front of the Meuse, where is centred the whole life of

this great commercial town. To the left extends a long line of gay little steamers, which leave every hour of the day for Dordrecht, Arnhem, Gouda, Schiedam, Briel, and Zealand. They are continually filling the air with the lively sound of their bells and with clouds of white smoke. To the right are the larger vessels that run between the different European ports, and among them are to be seen the beautiful three-masted ships that sail to and from the East Indies, with their names, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Samarang, written on them in letters of gold, bringing to the imagination those far-off ports and savage nations like the echo of far-off voices. In front, the Meuse is crowded by numbers of boats and barges, while its opposite bank is covered with a forest of beech trees, windmills, and workshop chimneys. Above this scene is a restless sky, with flashes of light mingling with ominous darkness, with scudding clouds and changing forms, which seemed to be trying to reproduce the busy activity of the earth.

Rotterdam, with the exception of Amsterdam, is the most important commercial city in Holland. It was a flourishing commercial town as early as the thirteenth century. Ludovico Guicciardini, in his work on the Netherlands which I have already mentioned, tells, in proof of the riches of the town, that in the sixteenth century within a year it rebuilt nine hundred houses which had been destroyed by fire.

Bentivoglio, in his history of the war of Flanders, calls it "the greatest and the most important commercial town that Holland possesses." But its greatest prosperity dates only from 1830; that is to say, after the separation of Holland from Belgium, which brought to Rotterdam all that prosperity of which it deprived her rival, Antwerp. Her situation is most advantageous. By means of the Meuse she communicates with the sea, and this river can carry the largest merchantmen into her ports in a few hours; through the same river she communicates with the Rhine, which brings her whole forests from the mountains of Switzerland and Bavaria—an immense quantity of timber, which in Holland is changed into ships, dykes, and villages. More than eighty splendid ships come and go between Rotterdam and India in the space of nine months. From every port merchandise pours in with such abundance that it has to be divided among the neighboring towns. Meanwhile, Rotterdam increases in size: the citizens are now constructing vast new store-houses, and are now working on a huge bridge which will span the Meuse and cross the entire town, thus extending the railway, which now stops on the left bank of the river, as far as the gate of Delft, where it will join the railway of the Hague.

In short, Rotterdam has a more brilliant future than Amsterdam, and for a long time has been feared

as a rival by her elder sister. She does not possess the great riches of the capital, but she is more industrious in using what wealth she has; she risks, dares, and undertakes, after the manner of a young and adventurous city. Amsterdam, like a wealthy merchant who has grown cautious after a life of daring speculations, has begun to doze and to rest on her laurels. To briefly characterize the three Dutch cities, it may be said that one makes a fortune at Rotterdam, one consolidates it in Amsterdam, and one spends it at the Hague.

One understands from this why Rotterdam is rather looked down upon by the other two cities, and is regarded as a *parvenu*. But there is yet another reason for this: Rotterdam is a merchant city pure and simple, and is exclusively occupied with her own affairs. She has but a small aristocracy, which is neither wealthy nor proud. Amsterdam, on the contrary, holds the flower of the old merchant princes. Amsterdam has great picture-galleries,—she fosters the arts and literature; she unites, in short, distinction and wealth. Notwithstanding their peculiar advantages, these sister cities are mutually jealous; they antagonize and fret each other: what one does the other must do; what the government grants to one, the other insists upon having. At the present moment (jointly), they are opening to the sea two canals which may not prove serviceable; but that is of no consequence: the government, like an

indulgent father, must satisfy both his elder and his younger daughter.

After I had seen the port, I went along the Boompjes dyke, on which stands an uninterrupted line of large new houses built in the Parisian and London style—houses which the inhabitants greatly admire, but which the stranger regards with disappointment or neglects altogether; I turned back, re-entered the city, and went from canal to canal, from bridge to bridge, until I reached the angle formed by the union of Hoog-Straat with one of the two long canals which enclose the town toward the east.

This is the poorest part of the town.

I went down the first street I came to, and took several turns in that quarter to observe how the lower classes of the Dutch live. The streets were extremely narrow, and the houses were smaller and more crooked than those in any other part of the city; one could reach many of the roofs with one's hand. The windows were little more than a span from the ground; the doors were so low that one was obliged to stoop to enter them. But nevertheless there was not the least sign of poverty. Even there the windows were provided with looking-glasses—spies, as the Dutch call them; on the window-sills there were pots of flowers protected by green railings; there were white curtains,—the doors were painted green or blue, and stood wide open, so

that one could see the bed-rooms, the kitchens, all the recesses of the houses. The rooms were like little boxes; everything was heaped up as in an old-clothes shop, but the copper vessels, the stoves, the furniture, were all as clean and bright as those in a gentleman's house. As I passed along these streets, I did not see a bit of dirt anywhere,—I met with no bad smells, nor did I see a rag, or a hand extended for alms; one breathes cleanliness and well-being, and thinks with shame of the squalid quarters in which the lower classes swarm in our cities, and not in ours only, for Paris too has its Rue Mouffetard.

Turning back to my hotel, I passed through the square of the great new market. It is placed in the centre of the city, and is not less strange than all that surrounds it.

It is an open square suspended over the water, being at the same time a square and a bridge. The bridge is very wide and unites the principal dyke—the Hoog-Straat—with a section of the town surrounded by canals. This aërial square is enclosed on three sides by venerable buildings, between which runs a street long, narrow, and dark, entirely filled by a canal, and reminding one of a highway in Venice. On the fourth side is a sort of dock formed by the widest canal in the city, which leads directly to the Meuse. In this square, surrounded by carts and stalls, in the midst of heaps of vege-

tables, oranges and earthenware, encircled by a crowd of hucksters and peddlers, enclosed by a railing covered with matting and rags, stands the statue of Desiderius Erasmus, the first literary celebrity of Rotterdam.

This Gerrit Gerritz—for, like all the great writers of his time, he assumed the Latin name—this Gerrit Gerritz belonged by his education, by his literary attainments, and by his convictions to the circle of the Italian humanists and literati. An elegant, learned, and indefatigable writer on literature and science, he filled all Europe with his fame between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; he was overwhelmed with favor by the popes, sought after and fêted by princes. Of his innumerable works, all of which were written in Latin, the "Praise of Folly," dedicated to Sir Thomas More, is still read. The bronze statue, erected in 1622, represents Erasmus dressed in a fur cloak and cap. The figure is slightly bent forward as if he were walking, and he holds in his hand a large open book, from which he is reading. There is a double inscription on the pedestal in Latin and Dutch, which calls him *vir sæculi sui primarius et civis omnium præstantissimus.* Notwithstanding this pompous eulogy, poor Erasmus, stood in the centre of the market-place like a municipal guard, excites our compassion. There is not, I believe, on the face of the earth another statue of a scholar that is so neglected by those who pass it, so de-

spised by those who surround it, and so pitied by those who look at it. However, who knows but that Erasmus, subtle professor that he was and will ever be, is contented with his corner, if indeed, as tradition tells, it be not far from his house? In a little street near the square, in the wall of a small house which is now used as a tavern, there is to be seen in a niche a bronze statuette of the great writer, and under it runs the inscription: *Hæc est parva domus magnus qua natus Erasmus.* Eight out of ten of the inhabitants of Rotterdam have probably never seen nor read it.

In an angle of the same square is a small house called "The House of Fear," where upon the wall is a picture whose subject I have forgotten. According to the tradition it is called "The House of Fear," because the most prominent people of the city took shelter in it when Rotterdam was sacked by the Spaniards, and were imprisoned in it three days without food. This is not the only record of the Spaniards to be found in Rotterdam. Many buildings, erected during the time of their dominion suggest the style of architecture then fashionable in Spain, and many still bear Spanish inscriptions. In the cities of Holland inscriptions on the houses are very common. The buildings, like old wine, glory in their antiquity and declare the date of their construction in large letters on the façades.

In the market square I had every opportunity of

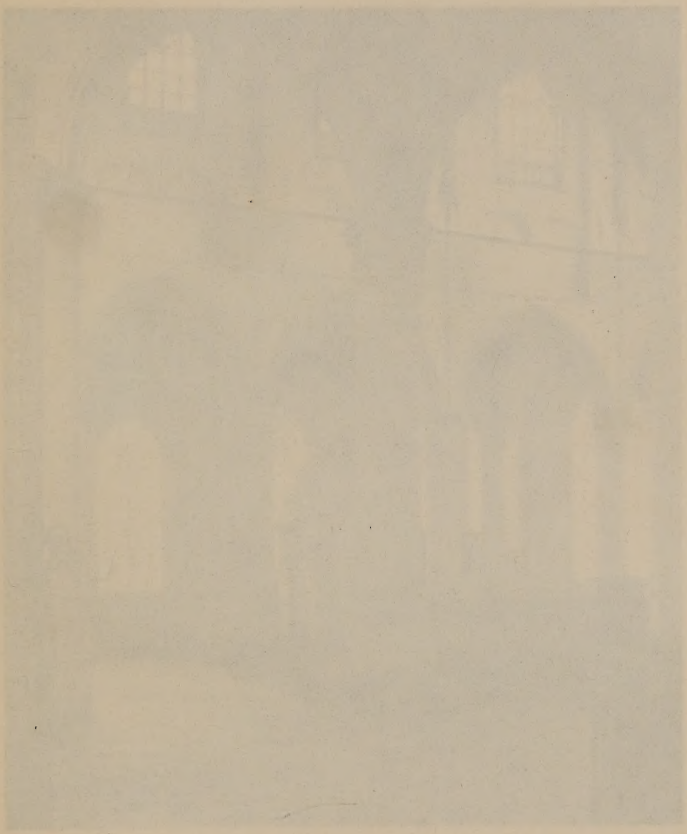
observing the earrings of the women, which deserve to be minutely described.

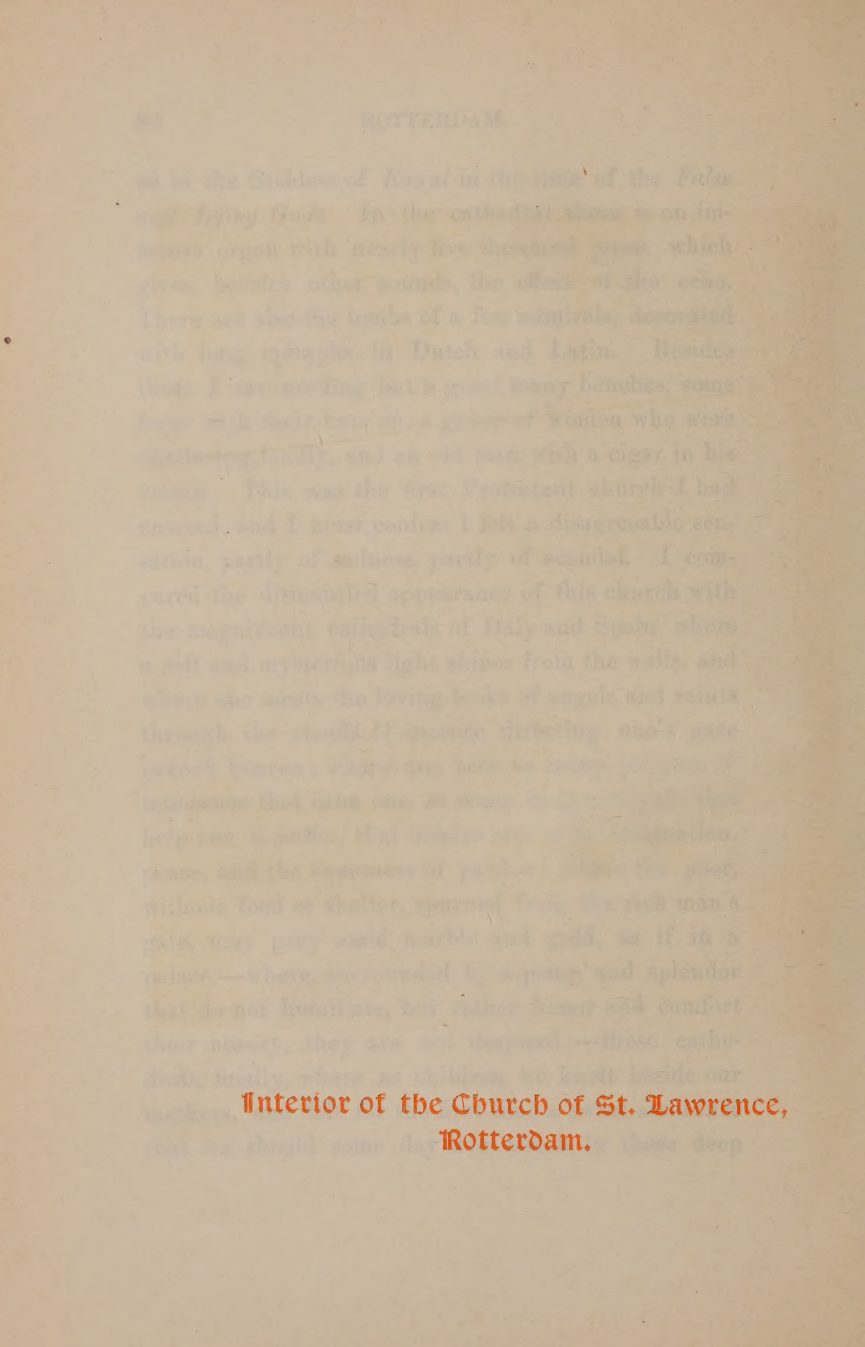
At Rotterdam, I saw only the earrings which are worn in South Holland, but even in this province alone the variety is very great. However, they are all alike in this respect,—instead of hanging from the ears, they are attached to a gold, silver, or gilded copper semicircle, which girds the head like a half diadem, its extremities resting on the temples. The commonest earrings are in the form of a spiral with five or six circles; they are often very wide, and are attached to the two ends of the semicircle. They project in front of the face like the frames of a pair of spectacles. Many of the women wear another pair of ordinary earrings attached to the spirals. These are very large and reach almost to the bosom, dangling in front of the cheeks like the head-gear of Italian oxen. Some women wear golden circles which gird the forehead also, and are chased and ornamented in relief with leaves, studs, and buttons. They nearly all dress their hair smooth and tight, and wear white caps embroidered and trimmed with lace. These fit the head closely like a night-cap, and cover the neck and shoulders, descending in the form of a veil, which is also embroidered and trimmed with lace. These flowing veils, resembling those of the Arabs, and the peculiar and enormous earrings, give these women an appearance partly regal and partly barbarous. If they were not so fair as they

are, one would take them for women of some savage land who had still preserved the ornaments of their native dress. I am not surprised that some travellers, seeing these earrings for the first time, have thought that they were at once an ornament and an instrument, and have asked their use. One might suppose that they are made thus for another purpose than that of beautifying the wearer—that they may serve as a defence to female modesty. For if any impertinent person should attempt to salute a cheek so guarded, he would encounter these obstacles and be kept at bay some distance from the coveted object. These earrings, which are worn chiefly by the peasant-women, are nearly all made of gold, and because of the size of the spirals and of the other accessories they cost a large sum. But I saw signs of even greater riches amongst the Dutch peasantry during my country rambles.

Near the market square stands the cathedral, which was founded toward the end of the fifteenth century at the time of the decadence of Gothic architecture. It was then a Catholic church consecrated to St, Lawrence; now it is the first Protestant church in the city. Protestantism, with religious vandalism, entered the ancient church with a pickaxe and a whitewash brush, and with bigoted fanaticism broke, scraped, rasped, plastered, and destroyed all that was beautiful and splendid, and reduced it to a bare, white, cold edifice, such as ought to have been devot-

ed to the Goddess of *Ennui* in the time of the *False and Lying Gods.* In the cathedral there is an immense organ with nearly five thousand pipes, which gives, besides other sounds, the effect of the echo. There are also the tombs of a few admirals, decorated with long epitaphs in Dutch and Latin. Besides these I saw nothing but a great many benches, some boys with their hats on, a group of women who were chattering loudly, and an old man with a cigar in his mouth. This was the first Protestant church I had entered, and I must confess I felt a disagreeable sensation, partly of sadness, partly of scandal. I compared the dismantled appearance of this church with the magnificent cathedrals of Italy and Spain, where a soft and mysterious light shines from the walls, and where one meets the loving looks of angels and saints through the clouds of incense directing one's gaze toward heaven; where one sees so many pictures of innocence that calm one, so many images of pain that help one to suffer, that inspire one with resignation, peace, and the sweetness of pardon; where the poor, without food or shelter, spurned from the rich man's gate, may pray amid marble and gold, as if in a palace,—where, surrounded by a pomp and splendor that do not humiliate, but rather honor and comfort their misery, they are not despised;—those cathedrals, finally, where as children we knelt beside our mothers, and felt for the first time a sweet assurance that we should some day live afresh in those deep





Interior of the Church of St. Lawrence, Rotterdam.

azure spaces that we saw painted in the dome suspended above us. Comparing this church with those cathedrals, I perceived that I was more of a Catholic than I had believed myself to be, and I felt the truth of those words of Castelar: "Well, yes, I am a free-thinker, but if some day I were to return to a religion, I would return to the splendid one of my fathers, and not to this squalid and nude doctrine that saddens my eyes and my heart."

From the top of the tower one gets a bird's-eye view of the whole city of Rotterdam with its steep little red roofs, its wide canals, its ships standing out against the houses, and all around the city a boundless plain of vivid green traversed by canals, fringed with trees, dotted with windmills and villages hidden in masses of verdure and showing only the points of their steeples. At that moment the sky was clear, and it was possible to see the gleaming waters of the Meuse from Bois-le-Duc almost to its mouth. I distinguished the steeples of Dordrecht, Leyden, Delft, the Hague, and Gouda; but nowhere, either near or far off, was there a hill, a rise in the ground, or a curve to break the straight even line of the horizon. It was like a sea, green and motionless, on which the steeples were the masts of anchored ships. The eye wandered over that vast plain with a sense of repose, and for the first time I experienced that indefinable feeling which the

Dutch landscape inspires. It is a feeling neither of sadness, of pleasure, nor of weariness, yet it embraces them all, and holds one for a long time motionless, without knowing at first what one is looking at or of what one is thinking. I was suddenly aroused by strange music; at first I could not tell whence it came. Bells were ringing a lively chime with silvery notes, now breaking slowly on the ear, as if they could scarcely detach themselves from each other; now blending in groups, in strange flourishes; now trilling, and swelling sonorously. The music was merry and fantastic, although of a somewhat primitive character, it is true, like the many-colored town over which it poured its notes like a flight of birds; indeed, it seemed to harmonize so well with the character of the city that it appeared to be its natural voice, an echo of the quaint life of the people, reminding me of the sea, the solitude, and the cottages, and at the same time it amused me and touched my heart. All at once the music stopped and the hour struck. At the same moment other steeples flung on the air other chimes, of which only the highest notes reached me, and when their chimes were ended they likewise struck the hour. This aërial concert, as I was told when its mechanism was explained to me, is repeated at every hour in the day and night by all the steeples of Holland, and the chimes are national airs, psalms, Italian and German melodies. Thus in Holland the hour sings, as though to draw the mind from contemplating the flight of

time, and it sings of country, of religion, and of love, with a harmony surpassing all the sounds of earth.

Now, to continue in order my story of what I saw and did, I must conduct my readers to a coffee-house and beg them to sit beside me at my first Dutch dinner.

The Dutch are great eaters. Their greatest pleasure, as Cardinal Bentivoglio has said, is to be at a feast or at some repast. But they are not epicures; they are voracious: they prefer quantity to quality. Even in ancient times they were famous among their neighbors, not only for the roughness of their habits, but for the simplicity of their diet. They were called eaters of milk and cheese. They usually eat five times a day. When they rise they take tea, coffee, milk, bread, cheese, butter; shortly before noon comes a good breakfast; before dinner they partake of some light nourishment, such as a glass of wine and biscuits; then follows a heavy dinner; and late in the evening, to use their own words, some trifle, so as not to go to bed with an empty stomach. They eat in company on many occasions. I do not mean on the occasions of christenings or marriages, as in other countries, but, for example, at funerals. It is the custom that the friends and relatives who have accompanied the funeral procession shall go home with the family of the deceased, where they are then invited to eat and drink, and they generally do great honor to their

hosts. If there were no other witnesses, the Dutch paintings are there to testify to the great part eating has always played in the life of this people. Besides the infinite number of domestic subjects, in which we might say that dishes and bottles are the protagonists, nearly all the large pictures representing historical personages, burgomasters, and national guard, show them seated at table in the act of eating, carving, or pouring out wine. Even their hero, William the Silent, the incarnation of New Holland, shared this national love of the table. He had the first cook of his time, who was so great an artist that the German princes sent beginners to perfect themselves at his school, and Philip II., in one of those periods of apparent reconciliation with his mortal enemy, begged for him as a present.

But, as I said, the principal characteristic of the Dutch kitchen is abundance, not delicacy. The French, who are *bon-vivants*, find much to criticise. I remember a writer of certain *Mémoires sur la Hollande* who inveighs with lyrical fervor against the Dutch cuisine, saying, "What style of eating is this? They mix soup and beer, meat and comfits, and devour quantities of meat without bread." Other writers of books about Holland have spoken of their dinners in that country as if they were domestic misfortunes. It is superfluous to say that all these statements are exaggerations. Even a fastidious palate can in a very short time accustom itself

to the Dutch style of cooking. The substantial part of the dinner is always a dish of meat, with which four or five side dishes of salt meat and vegetables are served. These every one mixes according to his taste and eats with the principal dish. The meats are excellent, the vegetables, which are cooked in a thousand different ways, are even better. Those which they cook in an especially worthy manner are potatoes and cabbages, and their way of making omelets is admirable. I do not speak of game, fish, milk-foods, and butter, because their praises need not be repeated, and I am silent for fear of being too enthusiastic about that celebrated cheese into which, when once one has plunged one's knife, one continues with a sort of increasing fury, thrusting and gashing and abandoning one's self to every style of slashing and gouging until the rind is empty, and desire still hovers over the ruins.

A stranger who dines for the first time in a Dutch restaurant sees a number of strange things. In the first place, the plates are very large and heavy, in proportion to the national appetite; in many places the napkins are of very thin white paper, folded at three corners, and ornamented with a printed border of flowers, with a little landscape in the corner, and the name of the restaurant, or *Bon appetit*, printed on them in large blue letters. The stranger, to be sure of having something he can eat, orders roast beef, and they bring him half a dozen great slices as large as a

cabbage leaf; or a steak, and they bring him a lump of very rare meat which would suffice for a family; or fish, and they set before him an animal as long as the table; and each of these dishes is accompanied by a mountain of mashed potatoes and a pot of strong mustard. They give him a slice of bread a little larger than a dollar and as thin as a wafer. This is not pleasant for us Italians, who eat bread like beggars, so that in a Dutch restaurant, to the great surprise of the waiters, we are obliged to ask for more bread every moment. On any one of these three dishes and a glass of Bavarian or Amsterdam beer a man may venture to say he has dined. Any one who has a lean pocket-book need not dream of wine in Holland, for it is frightfully dear; but, as the people's purses there are generally well filled, nearly all the Dutch, from the middle class up, drink wine, and there are few other countries where there is so great an abundance and variety of foreign wines, particularly of those from French and Rhenish vineyards.

Those who like liqueurs after dinner are well served in Holland. There is no need to mention that the Dutch liqueurs are famous the world over. The most famous of them all is "Schiedam," an extract of juniper-berries that takes its name from the little town of Schiedam, only a few miles from Rotterdam, where there are more than two hundred distilleries. To give an idea of the quantity made, it is sufficient to say that

thirty thousand pigs are fed annually on the dregs of the distilled material. The first time one tastes this renowned Schiedam he swears he will never take another drop of it if he lives to be a hundred years old; but, as the French proverb says, "Who has drunk will drink again," and one begins to try it with a great deal of sugar,—then with a little less,—then with none at all, until, *horribile dictu!* under the excuse of the damp and the fog one tosses down two small glasses with the freedom of a sailor. Next on the list comes Curaçoa, a fine feminine liqueur, not nearly so strong as Schiedam, but much stronger than that nauseating sweetened stuff that is sold in other countries under the recommendation of its name. After Curaçoa there are many others liqueurs, of every gradation of strength and flavor, with which an expert winebibber can indulge in every style of intoxication, slight, heavy, noisy, or stupid, and whereby he can dispose his brain to see the world in the manner most pleasing to his humor, much as one would do with an optical instrument by changing the color of the lens.

The first time one dines in Holland a curious surprise awaits one when the bill is paid. I had eaten a dinner which would have been scanty for a Batavian, but was ample for an Italian, and, knowing how very dear everything is in Holland, I was waiting for one of those bills to which Théophile Gautier says the only reasonable answer is a pistol-

shot. I was therefore pleasantly surprised when the waiter said I was to pay *forty sous*, and, as all kinds of money circulate in the large Dutch cities, I put on the table forty sous in silver francs, and waited to give my friend time to correct me if he had made a mistake. But he looked at the money without giving any sign of correcting himself, and said with the greatest gravity, "Forty sous more." Springing from my chair, I demanded an explanation. The explanation, alas! was simple. The monetary unit in Holland is the florin, which is equal to two francs four centimes in our money, so that the Dutch centime and sou are worth more than double the Italian centime and sou; hence the mistake and its correction.

Rotterdam at night presents to the stranger an unexpected appearance. In other northern towns at a certain hour the life is gathered within doors; in Rotterdam at the corresponding hour it overflows into the street. A dense crowd passes through the Hoog-Straat until late at night. The shops are open, for then the servants make their purchases and the coffee-houses are crowded. The Dutch coffee-houses are of a peculiar shape. They usually consist of one long saloon, divided in the middle by a green curtain, which is drawn at night, like the curtain of a theatre, hiding all the back part of the room. This part only is lighted. The front part, separated from the street by a large window, remains in the

dark, so that from the outside one can see only dim forms and the glowing ends of cigars, which look like fire-flies, and among these shadowy forms appears the uncertain profile of some woman, to whom light would be unwelcome.

After the coffee-houses, the tobacco-shops attract the attention, not only in Rotterdam, but in all other Dutch cities. There is one at almost every step, and they are beyond comparison the finest in Europe, not excepting even the great Havana tobacco-stores in Madrid. The cigars are kept in wooden boxes, on each of which is a printed portrait of the king or queen or of some illustrious Dutch citizen. These boxes are arranged in the high shop-windows in a thousand architectural styles,—in towers, steeples, temples, winding staircases, beginning on the floor and reaching almost to the ceiling. In these shops, which are resplendent with lights like the stores of Paris, one may find cigars of every shape and flavor. The courteous tobacconist puts one's purchase into a special tissue-paper envelope after he has cut off the end of one of the cigars with a machine made for the purpose.

The Dutch shops are brilliantly illuminated, and, although in themselves they do not differ materially from stores of other large European cities, they present at night a very unusual appearance, because of the contrast between the ground floor and the upper part of the house. Below, all is glass, light, color,

and splendor; above, the gloomy façades with their steep sharp lines, steps, and curves. The upper part of the house is plain, dark, and silent—in a word, ancient Holland; the ground floor is the new life—fashion, luxury, and elegance. Moreover, the houses are all very narrow, so the shops occupy the whole ground floor, and are generally so close together that they touch each other. Consequently at night, in streets like Hoog-Straat, one sees very little wall below the second floor. The houses seem to rest on glass, and in the distance the windows become blended into two long flaming stripes like gleaming hedges, flooding the streets with light, so that one could find a pin in them.

As one walks along the streets of Rotterdam in the evening, one sees that it is a city overflowing with life and in the process of expansion—a city, so to speak, in the flush of youth, in the time of growth, which, from year to year, outgrows its streets and houses, as a boy outgrows his clothes. Its one hundred and fourteen thousand inhabitants will be two hundred thousand at no distant time. The smaller streets swarm with children; indeed, they are filled to overflowing with them, so that it gladdens one's eyes and heart. An air of happiness breathes through the streets of Rotterdam. The white and ruddy faces of the servants, whose spotless caps are popping out everywhere, the serene faces of the tradespeople, who slowly sip their great mugs of beer, the peasants with their large golden

earrings, the cleanliness, the flowers in the windows, the quiet hard-working crowd,—all give to Rotterdam an appearance of health and peaceful content which brings the *Te beata* to our lips, not with a cry of enthusiasm, but with a smile of sympathy.

Re-entering the hotel, I saw an entire French family in a corridor gazing in admiration at the nails on a door which shone like so many silver buttons.

In the morning, as soon as I arose, I went to my window, which was on the second floor, and on looking at the roofs of the opposite houses, I confessed with surprise that Bismarck was excusable for believing he saw phantoms on the roofs at Rotterdam. Out of the chimney-pots of all the ancient houses rise curved or straight tubes, one above the other, crossing and recrossing like open arms, or forks, or immense horns, in such impossible positions that it seems as though they must understand each other and be speaking a mysterious language from house to house, and that at night they must move about with some purpose.

I walked down Hoog-Straat. It was Sunday and few shops were open. The Dutch told me that some years ago even those few would have been closed: the observance of the Sabbath, which used to be very strict, is becoming slack. I saw the signs of holiday chiefly in the people's clothes, in the dress of the men particularly. The men, especially those of the lower classes (and this I observed in

other towns also), have a decided taste for black clothes, which they wear proudly on Sundays—black cravats, black breeches, and certain black overcoats that reach almost to their knees. This costume, together with their leisurely gait and solemn faces, gives them the air of village syndics going to assist at an official *Te Deum*.

But what most surprised me was to see at that hour almost every one I met, gentry and peasantry, men and boys, with cigars in their mouths. This unfortunate habit of "*dreaming awake*," as Émile Girardin called it when he made war on smokers, occupies such a large part of the life of the Dutch people that it is necessary to say a few words about it.

The Dutch probably smoke more than any other northern nation. The humidity of the climate makes it almost a necessity, and the cheapness of tobacco puts it in everybody's power to satisfy this desire. To show how inveterate is this habit, it will suffice to say that the boatmen of the treschkuit (the stage-coach of the canals) measure distance by smoke. From here to such and such a town they say it is so many pipes, not so many miles. When you enter a house, the host, after the usual greetings, gives you a cigar; when you leave he gives you another, sometimes he fills your pocket. In the streets one sees men lighting fresh cigars with the stumps they have just smoked, with a hurried air, without stopping for a moment, as if it were equally disagreeable to them to

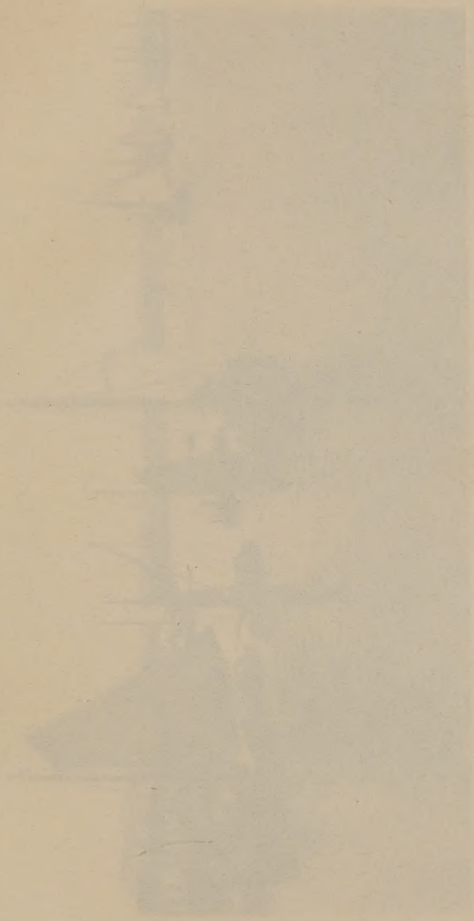
lose a moment of time and a mouthful of smoke. A great many men go to bed with their cigars in their mouths, light them if they awake in the night, and relight them in the morning before leaving their beds. "The Dutchman is a living alembic," writes Diderot; and it does really seem as though smoking is to him one of the necessary functions of life. Many say that much smoking clouds the brain. But, notwithstanding, if there is a people whose intelligence is clear and precise in the highest degree, that people is the Dutch. Moreover, smoking is no excuse for idleness among the Hollanders,—they do not smoke "to dream awake." Every one does his work while puffing white clouds of smoke from his mouth as if he were the chimney of a factory, and, instead of the cigar being a distraction, it is a stimulus and a help to labor. "Smoke is our second breath," said a Dutchman to me, and another defined the cigar as "the sixth finger of our hand."

Apropos of tobacco, I must tell of the life and death of a famous Dutch smoker, but I am rather afraid my Dutch friends who told me the story will shrug their shoulders, for they lamented that strangers who write on Holland pass over important things which do honor to the country, and mention only trifles such as this. However, this is such a remarkable trifle that I cannot resist the temptation of putting it down.

Once upon a time there was a wealthy gentle-

man who lived in the suburbs of Rotterdam. His name was Van Klaës, but he was nicknamed Papa Big Pipe, for he was a fat old fellow and a great smoker. He was a man of simple habits and kindly heart, who, as the story runs, had made a great fortune in India by honest trade. On his return from India he built himself a beautiful mansion near Rotterdam, and in this home he collected and arranged in order every imaginable kind of pipe. There were pipes of every country and of every period, from those used by ancient barbarians to smoke hemp, to the splendid meerschaum and amber pipes ornamented with carved figures and bands of gold like those seen in the finest stores of Paris. The museum was open to visitors, to each of whom, after he had aired his knowledge on the subject of pipe-collecting, Mr Van Klaës gave a pouch filled with tobacco and cigars, and a catalogue of the museum in a velvet cover.

Every day Mr Van Klaës smoked a hundred and fifty grammes of tobacco, and he died at the ripe old age of ninety-eight years; consequently, if we assume that he began to smoke when he was eighteen years old, he consumed in the course of his life four thousand three hundred and eighty-three kilogrammes. If this quantity of tobacco could be laid down in a continuous black line, it would extend twenty French leagues. But, in spite of all this, Mr Van Klaës showed that in death he was a far greater



On the Meuse, near Rotterdam.

smoker than he had been in life. Tradition has preserved all the particulars of his end. He was approaching his ninety-eighth birthday when it was suddenly borne in upon him that the end of his life was at hand. He summoned his notary, who was also a notable smoker, and, "Notary," said he with no unnecessary words, "fill my pipe and yours; I am going to die." The notary filled and lighted the pipes, and Mr Van Klaës dictated that will which has become celebrated all over Holland.

After he had bequeathed the greater part of his fortune to relatives, friends, and charities, he added the following clauses:

"I wish every smoker in the kingdom to be invited to my funeral in every way possible, by letter, circular, and advertisement. Every smoker who takes advantage of the invitation shall receive as a present ten pounds of tobacco, and two pipes on which shall be engraved my name, my crest, and the date of my death. The poor of the neighborhood who accompany my bier shall receive every year on the anniversary of my death a large package of tobacco. I make the condition that all those who assist at my funeral, if they wish to partake of the benefits of my will, must smoke without interruption during the entire ceremony. My body shall be placed in a coffin lined throughout with the wood of my old Havana cigar-boxes. At the foot of the coffin shall be placed a box of the French

tobacco called *caporal* and a package of our old Dutch tobacco. At my side place my favorite pipe and a box of matches, . . . for one never knows what may happen. When the bier rests in the vault, all the persons in the funeral procession are requested to cast upon it the ashes of their pipes as they pass it on their departure from the grounds."

The last wishes of Mr Van Klaës were faithfully fulfilled; the funeral went off splendidly, veiled in a thick cloud of smoke. The cook of the deceased, Gertrude by name, to whom in a codicil her master had left a considerable fortune on condition that she should overcome her aversion to tobacco, walked in the funeral procession with a cigarette in her mouth. The poor blessed the memory of the charitable gentleman, and all the country resounded with his praises as it now rings with his fame.

As I walked along one of the canals I saw under different conditions one of those sudden changes in the weather such as I had witnessed on the previous day. In a moment the sun disappeared, the infinite variety of cheerful colors was obscured, and a chilling wind began to blow. Then the subdued gayety which existed a few moments before gave place everywhere to a strange trepidation. The leaves of the trees rustled, the flags on the ships fluttered, the boats moored to the palisades tossed to and fro; the waters were troubled, a thousand articles suspended

from the houses dangled about,—the arms of the windmills spun rapidly around; it seemed as though a shiver of winter passed through everything, and that the city was apprehensive of a mysterious danger. In a few moments the sun shone out, and with it returned color, peace, and cheerfulness. This scene made me reflect that Holland is not really as sombre a country as many believe; it is rather very sombre one moment, and very cheerful the next, according to the weather. In everything it is a country of contrasts. Beneath a most capricious sky lives the least capricious people in the world, and yet this orderly and methodical nation possesses the tipsiest, most disordered architecture that eye can see.

Before entering the museum at Rotterdam, I think it will be opportune to make some observations on Dutch painting, naturally not for those "who know," understand, but for those who have forgotten.

Dutch art possesses one quality that renders it particularly attractive to us Italians: it is that branch of the world's art which differs most from the Italian school,—it is the antithesis, or, to use a phrase that enraged Leopardi, "the opposite pole in art." The Italian and the Dutch are the two most original schools of painting, or, as some say, the only two schools that can honestly lay claim to originality. The others are only daughters or younger sisters, which bear a certain resemblance to their elders. So

Holland even in its art offers us that which we most desire in travel and description—novelty.

Dutch art was born with the independence and freedom of Holland. So long as the northern and southern provinces of the Netherlands were united under Spanish dominion and the Catholic faith, they had only one school of painting. The Dutch artists painted like the Belgians; they studied in Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Heemskerk imitated Michelangelo; Bloemaert copied Correggio; De Moor followed Titian; to mention a few instances. They were pedantic disciples who united with all the affectations of the Italian style a certain German coarseness, and the outcome was a bastard style inferior to the earlier schools—childish, stiff, and crude in color, with no sense of light and shade. But, at any rate, it was not a slavish imitation; it was a faint prelude to real Dutch art.

With the war of independence came liberty, reform, and art. The artistic and religious traditions fell together. The nude, the nymphs, the madonnas, the saints, allegory, mythology, the ideal,—the whole ancient edifice was in ruins. The new life which animated Holland was revealed and developed in a new way. The little country, which had suddenly become so glorious and formidable, felt that it must tell its greatness. Its faculties, which had been strengthened and stimulated in the grand enterprise of creating a native land, a real world,—now that

this enterprise was achieved, expanded, and created an imaginary world. The conditions of the people were favorable to a revival of art. They had overcome the supreme perils which threatened them: security, prosperity, a splendid future, were theirs: their heroes had done their part; the time had come for artists. After so many sacrifices and disasters Holland came forth victorious from the strife, turned her face upon her people, and smiled, and that smile was Art.

We could picture to ourselves what this art was even if no example of it remained. A peaceable, industrious, practical people, who, to use the words of a great German poet, were continually brought back to dull realities by the conditions of a vulgar bourgeois life; who cultivated their reason at the expense of their imagination, living in consequence on manifest ideas rather than beautiful images; who fled from the abstract, whose thoughts never rose beyond nature, with which they waged continual warfare—a people that saw only what exists, that enjoyed only what it possessed, whose happiness consisted in wealthy ease and an honest indulgence of the senses, although without violent passions or inordinate desires;—such a people would naturally be phlegmatic in their art,—they would love a style that pleased but did not arouse them, that spoke to the senses rather than to the imagination—a school of art placid, precise, full of repose, and thoroughly

material like their life—an art, in a word, realistic and self-satisfied, in which they could see themselves reflected as they were and as they were content to remain.

The first Dutch artists began by depicting that which was continually before their eyes—the home. The long winters, the stubborn rains, the humidity, the continual changes in the climate, compel the Hollander to spend a great part of the year and of the day in the house. He loves his little home, his nutshell, much more than we love our houses, because it is much more necessary to him, and he lives in it much more; he provides it with every comfort, caresses it, adorns it; he delights in looking at the falling snow and drenching rain from its tight windows, and in being able to say, "Let the storms rage—I am safe and warm." In his little nest, beside his good wife and surrounded by his children, he passes the long evenings of autumn and winter, eating much, drinking much, smoking much, and amusing himself with honest mirth after the fatigues of the day. Dutch artists paint these little houses and this home-life in little pictures adapted in size to the little walls they must adorn; bedrooms which make one drowsy; kitchens with tables ready spread; the fresh, kindly faces of mothers of families; men basking in the warmth of the hearth; and, as they are conscientious realists who omit nothing, they add blinking cats, gaping dogs, scratching hens, brooms, vegetables, crockery, and

plucked chickens. This life is painted in every class of society and under every circumstance; evening-parties, dances, orgies, games, holidays, all are represented, and thus Ter Borch, Metsu, Netscher, Dou, Mieris, Steen, Brouwer, and Ostade became famous.

From home-life they turned to the country. The hostile climate gave them a very short time in which to admire nature, and for this reason the Dutch artists admire it only the more and salute the spring with greater joy. The fleeting smiles of the heavens are strongly impressed on their imagination. The country is not beautiful, but it is doubly dear to them because it has been wrested from the sea and from the hands of strangers. They painted it with affection, making their landscapes simple, ingenuous, and full of an intimacy with nature that neither the Italian nor the Belgian landscapes of this time possess. Their country, flat and monotonous, presented to their appreciative eyes a marvellous variety. They noted every change in the sky, and revealed the water in its every appearance, its reflection, its grace and freshness, and its power of diffusing light and color everywhere. There are no mountains, so they put the downs in the background of their pictures; and, lacking forests, they saw and expressed the mysteries of a forest in a group of trees, and animated all with noble animals and sails. The subjects of their pictures are poor indeed—a windmill, a canal, a gray sky—but how much they suggest! Some of

them, not content with their native land, came to Italy in search of hills, bright skies, and great ruins, and became a circle of choice artists, such as Both, Swanevelt, Pijnacker, Breenbergh, Van Laer, and Asselin; but the palm remains with the true Dutch landscape painters—with Wynants, the painter of morning; Van der Neer, the painter of night; Ruysdael, the painter of melancholy; Hobbema, the painter of windmills, cottages, and kitchen-gardens; and with others who contented themselves with expressing the charm of the modest scenes of their native land.

Side by side with landscape painting arose another branch of art, which was peculiar to Holland—the painting of animals. Cattle are the riches of the country, and the splendid breed of Holland is unequalled in Europe for its beauty and fecundity. The Dutch, who owe so much to their cattle, treat them, so to speak, as a part of the population; they love them, wash them, comb them, dress them. They are to be seen everywhere; they are reflected in the canals, and the country is beautified with their innumerable black and white spots dotting the wide meadows, giving every place an air of peace and repose, and inspiring one with a feeling of Arcadian sweetness and patriarchal serenity. The Dutch artists studied the differences and the habits of these animals; they divined, one may say, their thoughts and feelings, and enlivened the quiet beauty of

the landscapes with their figures. Rubens, Snyders, Paul de Vos, and many other Belgian artists had painted animals with wonderful ability, but they are surpassed by the Dutch painters, Van de Velde, Berchem, Karel du Jardin, and Paul Potter, the prince of animal painters, whose famous "Bull" in the gallery at the Hague deserves to be hung in the Louvre opposite Raphael's "Transfiguration."

The Dutch have become pre-eminent in another branch of art also—marine painting. The ocean, their enemy, their power, and their glory, overhanging their land, ever threatening and alarming them, enters into their life by a thousand channels and in a thousand forms. That turbulent North Sea, full of dark color, illuminated by sunsets of infinite gloom, and ever lashing its desolate banks, naturally dominated the imagination of the Dutch artists. They passed long hours on the shore contemplating the terrible beauties of the sea; they ventured from the land to study its tempests; they bought ships and sailed with their families, observing and painting; they followed their fleets to war and joined in the naval battles. Thus a school of marine artists arose, boasting such men as William Van de Velde the father and William the son, Bakhuisen, Dubbels, and Stork.

Another school of painting naturally arose in Holland as the expression of the character of the people and of republican customs. A nation that without greatness had done so many great things, as

Michelet says, required an heroic style of painting, if it may be so called, destined to illustrate its men and achievements. But simply because the nation was without greatness, or, to speak more accurately, without the outward form of greatness—because it was modest, and inclined to consider all alike equal in face of the fatherland, because all had done their duty, yet each abhorred that adulation and apotheosis which glorify in one person the virtues and triumphs the mass,—this style of painting was needed, not to extol a few eminent men or extraordinary events, but to represent all classes of citizens by occurrences of the most ordinary and peaceful moments of bourgeois life. Hence those large pictures representing groups of five, ten, or even thirty persons, gunners, syndics, officials, professors, magistrates, men of affairs, seated or standing round tables, feasting or arguing, all life-size and faithful portraits, with serious open countenances, from which shines the quiet expression of a tranquil conscience, from which one divines, rather than sees, the nobility of lives devoted to their country, the spirit of that laborious and dauntless epoch, the manly virtues of that rare generation. All this is relieved by the beautiful costumes of the Renaissance, which so admirably combined grace with dignity,—those ruffs, jerkins, black cloaks, silken scarfs, ribbons, arms, and banners. Van der Helst, Hals, Govert, Flink, and Bol were masters in this style of art.

To leave the consideration of the different branches of painting, and to inquire into the particular methods which the Dutch artists adopted and the means they employed to accomplish their results, one chief feature at once presents itself as the distinctive trait of Dutch painting—the light.

The light, because of the peculiar conditions under which it manifests itself in Holland, has naturally given rise to a peculiar style of painting. A pale light, undulating with marvellous changes, playing through an atmosphere heavy with vapor, a misty veil which is repeatedly and abruptly penetrated, a continual struggle between sunshine and shadow,—these were the phenomena that necessarily attracted the attention of artists. They began by observing and reproducing all this restlessness of the sky, this struggle which animates the nature of Holland with a varied and fantastic life, and by the act of reproducing it the struggle passed into their minds, and then, instead of imitating, they created. Then they themselves made the two elements contend; they increased the darkness to startle and disperse it with every manner of luminous effects and flashes of light; sunbeams stole through the gloom and then gradually died away; the reflections of twilight and the mellow light of lamps were delicately blended into mysterious shadows, which were animated with confused forms which one seems to see and yet cannot distinguish. So under their hands the light presents a thousand

fancies, contrasts, enigmas, and effects of shine and shade as unexpected as they are curious. Prominent in this field, among many others, were Gherard Dou, the painter of the famous picture of the four candles, and Rembrandt, the great wonder-working superhuman enlightener.

Another of the most striking characteristics of Dutch painting is naturally color. It is generally recognized that in a country where there are no distant mountains, no undulating views, no prominent features to strike the eye—in short, no general forms that lend themselves to design—the artist is strongly influenced by color. This is especially true in the case of Holland, where the uncertain light and the vague shadows which continually veil the air soften and obscure the outlines of objects until the eye neglects the form it cannot comprehend, and fixes itself on color as the chief quality that nature possesses. But there are yet other reasons for this: a country as flat, monotonous, and gray as Holland is has need of color, just as a southern country has need of shadow. The Dutch artists have only followed the dominant taste of the people, who paint their houses, their boats, their palisades, the fences of the fields, and in some places the very trunks of the trees, in the brightest colors; who dress themselves as of yore in clothes of the gayest hues; who love tulips and hyacinths to distraction. Hence all the Dutch painters were great colorists, Rembrandt being the first.

Realism, favored by the calm and sluggish nature of the Dutch, which enables their artists to restrain their impetuosity, and further aided by the Dutch character, which aims at exactness and refuses to do things by halves, gave to the paintings of the Hollanders another distinctive trait—finish. This they carried to the last possible degree of perfection. Critics say truthfully that in Dutch paintings one may discover the first quality of the nation—patience. Everything is portrayed with the minuteness of a daguerreotype: the furniture with all the graining of the wood, the leaf with all its veins, a thread in a bit of cloth, the patch with all the stitches showing, the animal with every hair distinct, the face with all its wrinkles,—everything is finished with such microscopic precision that it seems to be the work of a fairy's brush, for surely a painter would lose his sight and reason in such a task. After all, this is a defect rather than a virtue, because painting ought to reproduce not what exists, but rather what the eye sees, and the eye does not see every detail. However, the defect is brought to such a degree of excellence that it is to be admired rather than censured, and one does not even dare to wish that it should not be there. In this respect, Dou, Mieris, Potter, Van der Helst, and indeed all the Dutch painters in greater or less degree, were famous as prodigies of patience.

On the other hand, realism, which imparts to Dutch painting such an original character and such ad-

mirable qualities, is, notwithstanding, the root of its most serious defects. The Dutch painters, solicitous to copy only material truth, give to their figures the expression of merely physical sentiments. Sorrow, love, enthusiasm, and the thousand subtle emotions that are nameless, or that take different names from the different causes that give them birth, are rarely or never expressed. For them the heart does not beat, the eye does not overflow with tears, nor does the mouth tremble. In their pictures a whole part of the life is lacking, and that the most powerful and noble part, the human soul. Nay more, by so faithfully copying everything, the ugly especially, they end in exaggerating even that. They convert defects into deformities, portraits into caricatures; they slander the national type; they give every human figure an ungraceful and ludicrous appearance. To have a setting for figures they are obliged to select trivial subjects; hence the excessive number of canvases depicting taverns and drunken men with grotesque, stupefied faces, in sprawling attitudes; low women and old men who are despicably ridiculous; scenes in which we seem to hear the low yells and obscene words. On looking at these pictures one would say that Holland is inhabited by the most deformed and ill-mannered nation in the world. Some painters permit themselves even greater license. Steen, Potter, Brouwer, and the great Rembrandt himself often pandered to a low and depraved taste, and

Torrentius sent forth such shameless pictures that the provinces of Holland collect and burn them. But, overlooking these excesses, there is scarcely anything to be found in a Dutch gallery which elevates the soul, which awakens in the mind high and noble sentiments. One enjoys, one admires, one laughs, and sometimes one is silent before some landscapes, but on leaving one feels that one has not felt a real pleasure—that something was lacking. There comes a longing to look upon a beautiful face or to read inspired poetry, and sometimes, unconsciously, one catches one's self murmuring, "O Raphael!"

In conclusion, we must note two great merits in this school—its variety and its value as an expression, as a mirror, of the country. If Rembrandt and his followers are excepted, almost all the other painters are quite different from each other. Perhaps no other school presents such a number of original masters. The realism of the Dutch painters arose from their common love for nature, but each of them has shown in his work a different manifestation of a love all his own; each has given the individual impression that he has received from nature. They all set out from the same point—the worship of material truth, but they each arrived at a different goal. Their realism impelled them to copy everything, and the consequence is that the Dutch school has succeeded in representing Holland much more faithfully than any other school has illustrated any other country. It

has been said that if every other visible testimony to the existence of Holland in the seventeenth century—its great century—excepting the work of its artists were to disappear, everything would be found again in the pictures—the towns, the country, the ports, the fleets, the markets, the shops, the dress, the utensils, the arms, the linen, the merchandise, the pottery, the food, the amusements, the habits, the religion, and the superstitions. The good and the bad qualities of the nation are all alike represented, and this, which is a merit in the literature of a country, is no less a merit in its art.

But there is one great void in Dutch painting, for which the peaceful and modest character of the people is not a sufficient reason. This school of painting, which is so essentially national, has, with the exception of some great naval battles, passed over all of the grand exploits of the war of independence, among which the sieges of Leyden and Haarlem would have been sufficient to inspire a legion of artists. Of this war, almost a century in duration, filled with strange and terrible events, there is not a single memorable painting. This school, so varied and so conscientious in reproducing its country and its life, has not represented one scene of that great tragedy, as William the Silent prophetically called it, which aroused in the Hollanders such diverse emotions of fear and grief, rage, joy, and national pride.

The splendor of Holland's art faded with its polit-

The Steiger, Rotterdam

ical greatness. Nearly all the great painters were born during the first thirty years of the seventeenth or during the last years of the sixteenth century; none of them were living after the first ten years of the eighteenth century, and no others appeared to take their places. Holland had exhausted its productiveness. Already toward the end of the seventeenth century the sentiment of patriotism had commenced to weaken, taste had become depraved, the painters lost their inspiration with the decline of the moral energies of the country. In the eighteenth century the artists, as though surfeited with nature, returned to mythology, classicism, and conventionality; their imagination was weakened, their style was impoverished, and every spark of their former genius was extinguished. Dutch Art showed the world the marvellous flowers of Van Huysum, the last great lover of nature, then folded her weary hands and the flowers fell on his tomb.

The present gallery at Rotterdam contains but a small number of paintings, among which there are very few works of the best artists and none of the *chefs d'œuvre* of the Dutch School. Three hundred paintings and thirteen hundred drawings were destroyed by fire in 1864, and most of the works that are now there were bequeathed to the city of Rotterdam by Jacob Otto Boymans. Hence the gallery is a place to see examples of some particular artist, rather than to study Dutch painting.

In one of the first rooms are some sketches of naval battles, signed by William van de Velde, who is considered the greatest marine painter of his time. He was the son of William the elder, who was also a marine painter. Both father and son were fortunate enough to live at the time of the great naval wars between Holland, England, and France, and were able to see the battles with their own eyes. The States of Holland placed a frigate at the disposal of Van de Velde the elder; his son accompanied him. Both made their sketches in the midst of the battle-smoke, sometimes advancing so far among the fighting ships that the admirals were obliged to order them to withdraw. The younger Van de Velde surpassed his father. He painted small pictures—for the most part a gray sky, a calm sea, and some sails—but so naturally are they done that when one looks at them one seems to smell the salt air of the sea, and mistakes the frame for a window. This Van de Velde belongs to that group of Dutch painters who loved the water with a sort of madness, and who painted, one may say, on the water. Of these was Bakhuisen, a marine painter who had a great vogue in his day, whom Peter the Great chose as his master during his visit to Amsterdam. This Bakhuisen, it is said, used to risk himself in a small boat in the midst of a storm at sea that he might be able to observe more closely the movements of the waves, and he often placed his own life and the lives of his boatmen in such danger

that the men, caring more for their skins than for his paintings, sometimes took him back to land against his will. John Griffier did more. He bought a little ship in London, furnished it like a house, installed his wife and children in it, and sailed about on his own responsibility in search of subjects. A storm dashed his vessel to pieces against a sandbank and destroyed all he possessed; he and his family were saved by a miracle, and settled in Rotterdam. But he soon grew weary of a life on land, bought a shattered boat and put to sea again; he nearly lost his life a second time near Dordrecht, but still continued his voyages.

The Rotterdam gallery affords very few examples of marine paintings, but landscape painting is worthily represented by two pictures by Ruysdael, the greatest of the Dutch painters of rural scenes. These two paintings represent his favorite subjects—leafy, solitary spots, which, like all his works, inspire a subtle feeling of melancholy. The great power of this artist is sentiment. He is eminent in the Dutch school for a gentleness of soul and a singular superiority of education. It has been most truly said of him that he used landscape as an expression of his suffering, his weariness, his fancies, and that he contemplated his country with a bitter sadness, as if it were a place of torment, and that he created the woods to hide his gloom in their shade. The soft light of Holland is the image of his soul;

none felt more exquisitely than he its melancholy sweetness, none represented more feelingly than he, with a ray of languid light, the smile of a suffering fellow-creature. Because of the exceptional delicacy of his nature he was not appreciated by his fellow-citizens until long after his death.

Beside a painting by Ruysdael hangs a picture of flowers by a female artist, Rachel Ruysch, the wife of a famous portrait-painter, who was born toward the close of the sixteenth century, and died, brush in hand, in the eightieth year of her age, after she had shown to her husband and to the world that a sensible woman can passionately cultivate the fine arts and yet find time to rear and educate ten children.

And as I have spoken of the wife of a painter, I simply mention that it is possible to write an entertaining book on the wives of Dutch artists, both because of the variety of their adventures and the important part they play in the history of art. The faces of a number are known already, because many artists painted their wives' portraits, as well as their own and those of their children, their cats, and their hens. Biographers speak of most of them, confirming or contradicting reports which have been circulated in regard to their conduct. Some have hazarded the opinion that the larger number of them were a serious drawback to their husbands. It seems to me there is something to be said on the other side. As for Rembrandt, it is known that the happiest part of his life

was the time between his first marriage and the death of his wife, who was the daughter of a burgomaster of Leeuwarden, and to whom posterity owes a debt of gratitude. It is also known that Van der Helst at an advanced age married a beautiful girl, for whom there is nothing but praise, and posterity should be grateful to her for having brightened the old age of a great artist. It is true that we cannot speak of all in the same terms. Of the two wives of Steen, for example, the first was a featherhead, who allowed the tavern at Delft that he had inherited from his father to go to ruin; and the second, from all accounts, was unfaithful. Heemskerk's second wife was so dishonest that her husband was obliged to go about excusing her peculations. De Hondecoeter's wife was an eccentric and troublesome woman, who forced her husband to pass his evenings in a tavern in order to rid himself of her company. The wife of Berghem was so intolerably avaricious that if she found him dozing over his brushes she awoke him roughly to make him work and earn money, and the poor man was obliged to resort to subterfuges to purchase engravings when he was paid for his pictures. On the other hand, one could never end reciting the misdeeds of the husbands. The artist Griffier compelled his wife to travel about the world in a boat; Veen begged his wife's permission to spend four months in Rome, and stayed there four years. Karel du Jardin married a rich old woman to pay his debts, and deserted her

when she had paid them. Molyn, another artist, had his wife assassinated that he might marry a Genoese. I doubt whether poor Paul Potter, as the story runs, was betrayed by the wife whom he blindly loved; and who knows whether Huysum, the great flower-painter, who was consumed by jealousy in the midst of riches and glory for a wife who was neither young nor beautiful, had real grounds for his doubts, or whether he was not induced by the reports of his envious rivals to believe what was untrue? In conclusion, I must mention with due honor the three wives of Eglon Van der Neer, who crowned him with twenty-five children—a family which, however, did not keep him from painting a large number of pictures in every style, from making several voyages, and from cultivating tulips.

There are several small paintings by Albert Cuyp in the Rotterdam gallery, a landscape, horses, fowls, and fruit—that Albert Cuyp who holds a unique place in Dutch art, who in the course of a prolonged life painted portraits, landscapes, animals, flowers, winter pieces, moonlight scenes, marine subjects, figures, and in each style left an imprint of originality. But nevertheless, like most of the Dutch painters of his time, he was so unfortunate that until 1750, more than fifty years after his death, his paintings sold for a hundred francs, whereas they now would bring a hundred thousand francs—not in Holland, but in England, where most of his works are owned.

Heemskerk's "Christ at the Sepulchre" would not be worth mentioning if it were not an excuse for introducing the artist, who was one of the most curious creatures that ever walked the face of the earth. Van Veen—such is his real name—was born in the village of Heemskerk at the end of the fifteenth century, and flourished at the period of Italian imitation. He was the son of a peasant, and, although he had an inclination toward art, he was intended for a peasant. He became a painter by chance, like many other Dutch artists. His father had a furious temper, and the son was very much afraid of him. One day poor Van Veen dropped the milk-jug; his father flew at him, but he ran out of the house and spent the night somewhere else. The next morning his mother found him, and, thinking it would be unsafe for him to face the paternal anger, she gave him a small quantity of linen, a little money, and commended him to the care of God. The lad went to Haarlem, and, obtaining an entrance to the studio of a famous artist, he studied, succeeded, and then went to Rome to perfect himself. He did not become a great artist, for the imitation of the Italian school spoiled him: his treatment of the nude was stiff and his style full of mannerisms, but he painted a great deal and was well paid, and did not regret his early life. But herein consisted his peculiarity: he was, as his biographers assert, a man incredibly, morbidly and ridiculously timid. When he knew that

the arquebusiers were to pass he climbed the roofs and steeples, and trembled with fear when he saw their arms in the street. If any one thinks this an idle story, there is a fact which serves to prove it true: he was in the town of Haarlem when the Spaniards besieged it, and the magistrates, who knew his weakness, permitted him to flee from the city before they began to fight, doubtless foreseeing that otherwise he would have died of fright. He took advantage of the permission and fled to Amsterdam, leaving his fellow-citizens in the lurch.

Other Dutch painters—for we are speaking of the men, not of their pictures—like Heemskerk, owed their choice of a profession to accident. Everdingen, of the first order of landscape-painters, owed his choice to a tempest which wrecked his ship on the shore of Norway, where he remained, was inspired by the grand natural scenery and created an original style of landscape art. Cornelisz Vroom also owed his fortune to a shipwreck: he was on his way to Spain with some religious pictures; when the vessel was wrecked near the coast of Portugal, the poor artist saved himself with others on an uninhabited island, where they remained two days without food. They considered themselves as good as lost, when they were unexpectedly relieved by some monks from a monastery on the coast, whither the sea had borne the hulk of the vessel with the pictures, which were unharmed. These the monks considered admirable.

Thus was Cornelisz sheltered, welcomed, and stimulated to paint, and the profound emotions occasioned by the wreck gave his genius such a new and powerful impulse that he became a real artist. Another, Hans Fredeman, the famous trick painter who painted some columns on the frame of a drawing-room door so cleverly that Charles V. turned round to look as soon as he had entered, and thought that the walls had suddenly closed behind him by enchantment,—this Hans Fredeman, who painted palisades that made people turn back, doors which people attempted to open, owed his fortune to a book on architecture by Vitruvius which he obtained by chance from a carpenter.

There is a good little picture by Steen which represents a doctor pretending to operate on a man who imagines himself to be sick: an old woman is holding a basin, the invalid is shrieking desperately, and a few curious neighbors, convulsed with laughter, look on from a window.

When one says that this picture makes one break into an irresistible peal of laughter, one has said all that is necessary. After Rembrandt, Steen is the most original figure-painter of the Dutch school; he is one of those few artists whom, when once known, whether they are or are not congenial to our taste, we must perforce admire as great painters, and even if we consider them worthy of only secondary honors, it matters not, they remain indelibly impressed on

our minds. After one has seen Steen's pictures it is impossible to see a drunkard, a buffoon, a cripple, a dwarf, a deformed face, a ridiculous smirk, a grotesque attitude, without remembering one of his figures. All the degrees of stupidity and of drunkenness, all the grossness and mawkishness of orgies, the frenzy of the lowest pleasures, the cynicism of the vulgarest vice, the buffoonery of the wildest rabble, all the most brutal emotions, the basest aspects of tavern and alehouse life, have been painted by him with the brutality and insolence of an unscrupulous man, and with such a sense of the comic, such an impetuosity, such an intoxication of inspiration, one might say that words cannot express the effect produced. Writers have devoted many volumes to him, and have advanced many different opinions about him. His warmest admirers have attributed to him a moral purpose—that of making debauchery hateful by painting it as he did in repulsive colors, for the same reason that the Spartans showed drunken Helots to their sons. Others see in his paintings only the spontaneous and thoughtless expression of the spirit and taste of the artist, whom they represent as a vulgar debauchee. However this may be, there is no doubt that in the effects produced Steen's painting may be considered a satire on vice, and in this he is superior to almost all the Dutch painters, who restricted themselves to an external realism. Hence he was called the Dutch Hogarth, the jovial philoso-

pher, the keenest observer of the habits of his countrymen, and one among his admirers has said that if Steen had been born at Rome instead of at Leyden, and had Michelangelo instead of Van Goyen been his master, he would have been one of the greatest painters in the world. Another finds some kind of analogy between him and Raphael. The technical qualities of his paintings are much less admired, his work has not the finish nor the strength of the other artists, such as Ostade, Mieris, and Dou. But, even taking into consideration its satirical character, one must say that Steen has often exceeded his purpose if he really had a purpose. The fury with which he pursued the burlesque often got the better of his feeling for reality; his figures, instead of being merely ridiculous, became monstrous and hardly human, often resembling beasts rather than men, and he has exaggerated these figures until sometimes he awakens, a feeling of nausea instead of mirth, and a sense of indignation that nature should be so outraged. The effect he produces is generally a laugh,—a loud, irresistible laugh, which bursts from one even when alone and calls the people away from the neighboring pictures. It is impossible to carry further than Steen did the art of flattening noses, twisting mouths, shortening necks, making wrinkles, rendering faces stupid, putting on humps, and making his puppets seem as if they were roaring with laughter, vomiting, reeling, or falling. By the leer of a

half-closed eye he expressed idiocy and sensuality; by a sneer or a gesture he revealed the brutality of a man. He makes one smell the odor of a pipe, hear the coarse laughter, guess at the stupid or foul discourses—to understand, in a word, tavern-life and the dregs of the people; and I maintain that it is impossible to carry this art to a higher point than that to which Steen has carried it.

His life has been and still is a vexed question. Volumes have been written to prove that he was a drunkard, and volumes to prove that he was a sober man; and, as is always the case, both sides exaggerate. He kept an alehouse at Delft, but it did not pay; then he set up a tavern and things went worse. It is said that he was its most assiduous frequenter, that he would drink up all the wine, and that when the cellar was empty he would take down the sign, close the door, and begin to paint furiously, and when he had sold his pictures he would buy more wine and begin life again. It is even said that he paid for everything with his pictures, and that consequently all his paintings were to be found in wine-merchants' houses. It is really difficult to explain how he could have painted such a large number of admirable works if he was always intoxicated, but it is no less difficult to understand why he had a taste for such subjects if he led a steady, sober life. It is certain that, especially during the last years of his life, he committed every sort of extravagance. He

at first studied under the famous landscape painter Van Goyen, but genius worked in him more powerfully than study; he divined the rules of his art, and if it sometimes seems that he has painted too black, as some of his critics have said, it was the fault of an extra bottle of wine at dinner.

Steen is not the only Dutch painter who, whether deservedly or not, won a reputation for drunkenness. At one time nearly all the artists passed the greater part of their day in the taverns, where they became famously drunk, fell to fighting, and whence they came out bruised and bleeding. In a poem upon painting by Karel van Mander, who was the first to write the history of the painters of the Netherlands, there occurs a passage directed against drunkenness and the habit of fighting, part of which runs as follows: "Be sober and live so that the unhappy proverb 'As debauched as a painter' may become 'As temperate as an artist.'" To mention a few among the most famous artists, Mieris was a notable winebibber, Van Goyen a drunkard, Franz Hals, the master of Brouwer, a winesack, Brouwer an incorrigible tippler; William Cornelis, and Hondecoeter were on the best terms with the bottle. Many of the humbler painters are said to have died intoxicated. Even in death the history of the Dutch painters presents a thousand incongruities. The great Rembrandt expired in misery almost without the knowledge of any; Hobbema died in the poor quarter of

Amsterdam; Steen died in poverty; Brouwer died at a hospital; Andrew Both and Henry Verschuringh were drowned; Adrian Bloemaert met his death in a duel; Karel Fabritius was killed by the explosion of a powder-magazine; Johann Schotel died, brush in hand, of a stroke of apoplexy; Potter died of consumption; Lucas of Leyden was poisoned. So, what with shameful deaths, debauchery, and jealousy, one may say that a great part of the Dutch painters have had an unhappy fate.

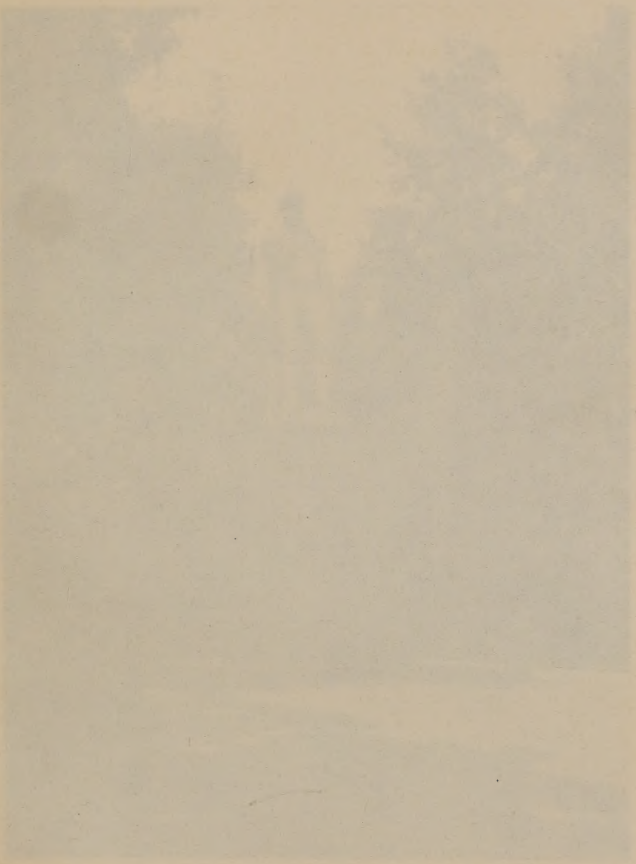
In the gallery at Rotterdam there is a beautiful head by Rembrandt; a scene of brigands by Wouverman, a great painter of horses and battles; a landscape by Van Goyen, the painter of dead shores and leaden skies; a marine painting by Bakhuisen, the painter of storms; a painting by Berghem, the painter of smiling landscapes; one by Everdingen, the painter of waterfalls and forests; and other paintings belonging to the Italian and Flemish schools.

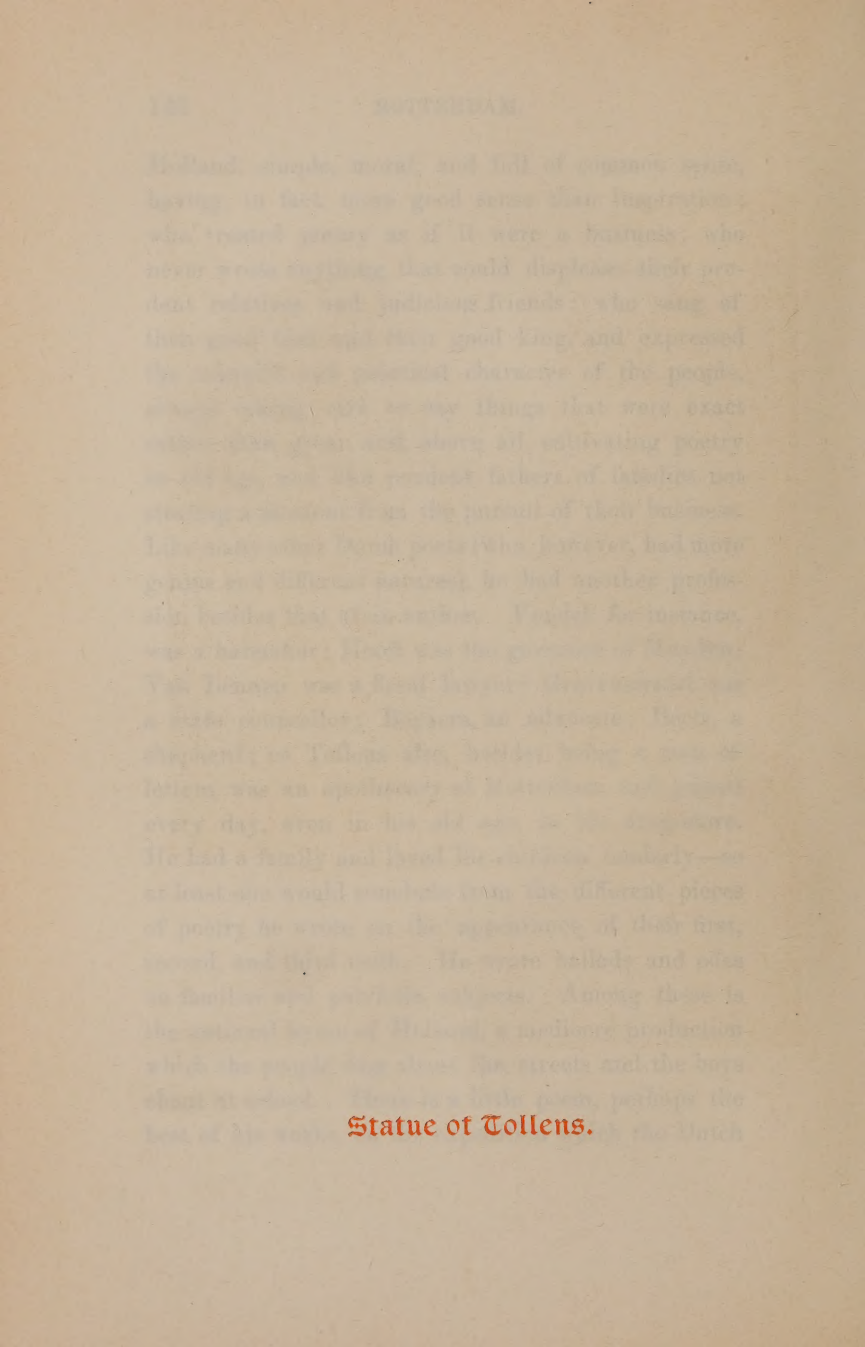
On leaving the museum I met a company of soldiers, the first Dutch soldiers I had seen. Their uniform was dark colored, without any showy ornaments, and they were all fair from first to last, and wore their hair long, and almost all of them had a peaceful, happy look, which seemed in strange contrast with the arms they bore. Rotterdam, a city of more than a hundred thousand inhabitants, has a garrison of three hundred soldiers! And it is said that Rotter-

dam has the name of being the most turbulent and unruly city in Holland! In fact, some time ago there was a popular demonstration against the municipality, which had no consequences but a few broken windows. But in a country like this, which runs by clockwork, it must have seemed, and did truly seem, a great event; the cavalry was sent from the Hague, the country was in commotion. One must not think, however, that this people is all sugar; the citizens of Rotterdam confess that "the holy rabble," as Carducci calls it, is stoutly licentious, as is the case in other towns of worse reputation; the lack of police is rather an incentive to license than a proof, as some might think, of public discipline.

Rotterdam, as I have already said, is a city neither artistic nor literary; on the contrary, it is one of the few Dutch cities that have not given birth to some great painter—an unproductiveness shared by the whole of Zealand. Erasmus, however, is not its only man of letters. In a little park that extends to the right of the town on the bank of the Meuse there is a marble statue raised by the inhabitants of Rotterdam to honor the poet Tollens, who was born at the end of last century and died a few years ago. This Tollens, whom some dare to call the Béranger of Holland, was (and in this alone he resembles Béranger) one of the most popular poets of the country —one of those poets of which there were so many in

Holland, simple, moral, and full of common sense, having, in fact, more good sense than inspiration; who treated poetry as if it were a business; who never wrote anything that could displease their prudent relatives and judicious friends; who sang of their good God and their good king, and expressed the tranquil and practical character of the people, always taking care to say things that were exact rather than great, and, above all, cultivating poetry in old age, and like prudent fathers of families not stealing a moment from the pursuit of their business. Like many other Dutch poets (who, however, had more genius and different natures), he had another profession besides that of an author. Vondel, for instance, was a hatmaker; Hooft was the governor of Muyden; Van Lennep was a fiscal lawyer; Gravenswaert was a state counsellor; Bogaers, an advocate; Beets, a shepherd; so Tollens also, besides being a man of letters, was an apothecary at Rotterdam, and passed every day, even in his old age, in his drug-store. He had a family and loved his children tenderly—so at least one would conclude from the different pieces of poetry he wrote on the appearance of their first, second, and third teeth. He wrote ballads and odes on familiar and patriotic subjects. Among these is the national hymn of Holland, a mediocre production which the people sing about the streets and the boys chant at school. There is a little poem, perhaps the best of his works, on the expedition which the Dutch





Statue of Tollens.

sent to the Polar Sea toward the end of the sixteenth century. The people learn his poetry by heart, adore him, and prefer him as their most faithful interpreter and most affectionate friend. But, for all this, Tollens is not considered in Holland as a first-class poet, many do not even rank him in the second class, while not a few disdainfully refuse to give him the sacred laurels.

After all, if Rotterdam is not a centre of literature and art, she has as compensation an extraordinary number of philanthropic institutions, splendid clubs, and all the comforts and diversions of a city of wealth and refinement.

The observations that I have had occasion to make on the character and life of the inhabitants will be more to the purpose at the Hague. I will only mention that in Rotterdam, as in other Dutch cities, no one, in speaking of their country's affairs, showed the least national vanity. The expressions, "Isn't it beautiful?" "What do you think of that?"—which one hears every moment in other countries, are never heard in Holland, even when the inhabitants are speaking of things that are universally admired. Every time that I told a citizen of Rotterdam that I liked the town he made a gesture of surprise. In speaking of their commerce and institutions they never let a vain expression escape them, nor even a boastful or complacent word. They always speak of what they are going to do, and never of what they have done. One of the first

questions put to me when I named my country was, "What about its finances?" As to their own country, I observed that they know all that it is useful to know, and very little that it is simply a pleasure to know. A hundred things, a hundred parts of the city, which I had observed when I had been twenty-four hours at Rotterdam, many of the citizens had never seen; which proves that they are not in the habit of rambling about and looking at everything.

When I took my leave my acquaintances filled my pockets with cigars, counselled me to eat good nourishing dinners, and gave me advice on the subject of economical travelling. They parted from me quietly. There was no clamorous "What a pity you are going!" "Write soon!" "Come back quickly!" "Don't forget us!" which rang in my ears on leaving Spain. Here there was nothing but a hearty shake of the hand, a look, and a simple good-bye.

On the morning when I left Rotterdam I saw in the streets through which I passed to get to the Delft railway-station a novel spectacle, purely Dutch—the cleaning of the houses, which takes place twice a week in the early morning hours. All the servants in the city, dressed in flowered lilac-colored wrappers, white caps, white aprons, white stockings, and white wooden shoes, and with their sleeves turned up, were busily washing the doors, the walls, and the windows. Some sat courageously on the window-sills while they washed the panes of the windows with sponges,

turning their backs to the street with half their bodies outside; others were kneeling on the pavement cleaning the stones with rough cloths; others were standing in the middle of the street armed with syringes, squirts, and pumps, with long rubber tubes, like those used for watering gardens, and were sending against the second-floor windows streams of water which were pouring down again into the street; others were mopping the windows with sponges and rags tied to the tops of long bamboo canes; others were burnishing the door-knobs, rings, and door-plates; some were cleaning the staircases, some the furniture, which they had carried out of the houses. The pavements were blocked with buckets and pitchers, with jugs, watering-pots, and benches; water ran down the walls and down the street; jets of water were gushing out everywhere. It is a curious thing that while labor in Holland is so slow and easy in all its forms, this work presented an appearance altogether different. All those girls with glowing faces were bustling indoors and hurrying out again, rushing up stairs and down, tucking up their sleeves hastily, assuming bold acrobatic attitudes and undergoing dangerous contortions. They took no notice of those who passed by except when with jealous eyes it was necessary to keep the profane race away from the pavement and walls. In short, it was a furious rivalry of cleanliness, a sort of general ablution of the city, which had about it something childish and

festive, and which made one fancy that it was some rite of an eccentric religion which ordered its followers to cleanse the town from a mysterious infection sent by malicious spirits.

DELFT.

DELFT.

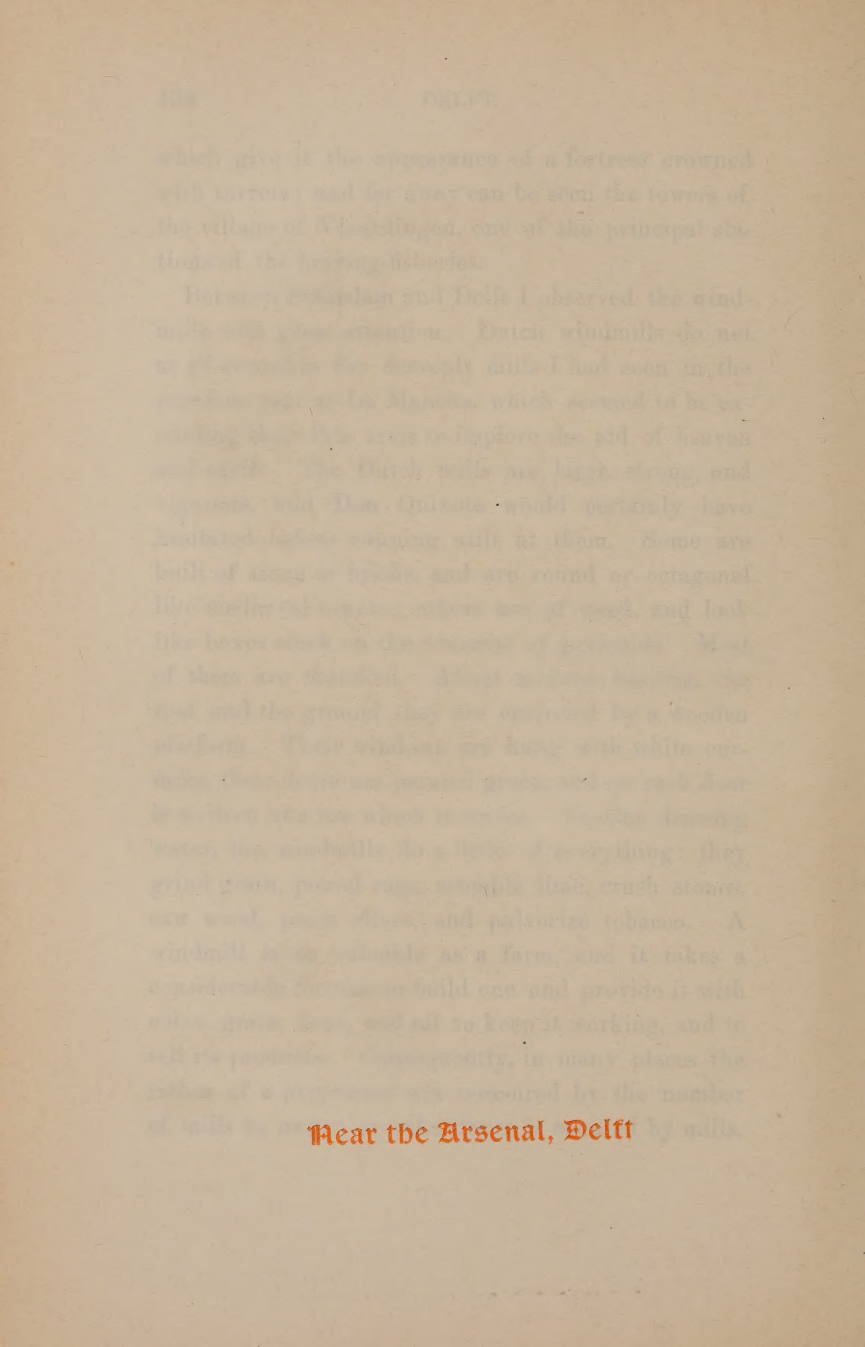
On my way from Rotterdam to Delft I saw for the first time the plains of Holland.

The country is perfectly flat—a succession of green and flower-decked meadows, broken by long rows of willows and clumps of alders and poplars. Here and there appear the tops of steeples, the turning arms of windmills, straggling herds of large black and white cattle, and an occasional shepherd; then, for miles, only solitude. There is nothing to attract the eye, there is neither hill nor valley. From time to time the sail of a ship is seen in the distance, but as the vessel is moving on an invisible canal, it seems to be gliding over the grass of the meadows as it is hidden for a moment behind the trees and then reappears. The wan light lends a gentle, melancholy influence to the landscape, while a mist almost imperceptible makes all things appear distant. There is a sense of silence to the eye, a peace of outline and color, a repose in everything, so that the vision grows dim and the imagination sleeps.

Not far from Rotterdam the town of Schiedam comes into view, surrounded by very high windmills,

which give it the appearance of a fortress crowned with turrets; and far away can be seen the towers of the village of Vlaardingen, one of the principal stations of the herring-fisheries.

Between Schiedam and Delft I observed the windmills with great attention. Dutch windmills do not at all resemble the decrepit mills I had seen in the previous year at La Mancha, which seemed to be extending their thin arms to implore the aid of heaven and earth. The Dutch mills are large, strong, and vigorous, and Don Quixote would certainly have hesitated before running atilt at them. Some are built of stone or bricks, and are round or octagonal like mediæval towers; others are of wood, and look like boxes stuck on the summits of pyramids. Most of them are thatched. About midway between the roof and the ground they are encircled by a wooden platform. Their windows are hung with white curtains, their doors are painted green, and on each door is written the use which it serves. Besides drawing water, the windmills do a little of everything: they grind grain, pound rags, crumble lime, crush stones, saw wood, press olives, and pulverize tobacco. A windmill is as valuable as a farm, and it takes a considerable fortune to build one and provide it with colza, grain, flour, and oil to keep it working, and to sell its products. Consequently, in many places the riches of a proprietor are measured by the number of mills he owns; an inheritance is counted by mills,



Near the Arsenal, Delft

and they say of a girl that she has so many windmills as dowry, or, even better, so many steam-mills; and fortune-hunters, who are to be found everywhere, sue for the maiden's hand to marry the mill. These countless winged towers scattered through the country give the landscape a singular appearance; they animate the solitude. At night in the midst of the trees they have a fantastic appearance, and look like fabulous birds gazing at the sky. By day in the distance they look like enormous pieces of fireworks; they turn, stop, curb and slacken their speed, break the silence by their dull and monotonous tick-tack, and when by chance they catch fire—which not infrequently happens, especially in the case of flour-mills—they form a wheel of flame, a furious rain of burning meal, a whirlwind of smoke, a tumult, a dreadful magnificent brilliance that gives one the idea of an infernal vision.

In the railway-carriage, although it was full of people, I had no opportunity of speaking or of hearing a word spoken. The passengers were all middle-aged men with serious faces, who looked at each other in silence, puffing out great clouds of smoke at regular intervals as if they were measuring time by their cigars. When we arrived at Delft I greeted them as I passed out, and some of them responded by a slight movement of the lips.

"Delft," says Lodovico Guicciardini, "is named after a ditch, or rather the canal of water which

leads from the Meuse, since in the vulgar tongue a ditch is generally called *delft*. It is distant two leagues from Rotterdam, and is a town truly great and most beautiful in every part, having goodly and noble edifices and wide streets, which are lively withal. It was founded by Godfrey, surnamed the Hunchback, duke of Lorraine, he who for the space of four years occupied the country of Holland."

Delft is the city of disaster. Toward the middle of the sixteenth century it was almost entirely destroyed by fire; in 1654 the explosion of a powder-magazine shattered more than two hundred houses; and in 1742 another catastrophe of the same kind occurred. Besides these calamities, William the Silent was assassinated there in the year 1584. Moreover, there followed the decline and almost the extinction of that industry which once was the glory and riches of the city, the manufacture of Delft ware. In this art at first the Dutch artisans imitated the shapes and designs of Chinese and Japanese china, and finally succeeded in doing admirable work by uniting the Dutch and Asiatic styles. Dutch pottery became famous throughout Northern Europe, and it is now-a-days as much sought after by lovers of this art as the best Italian products.

At present Delft is not an industrial or commercial city, and its twenty-two thousand inhabitants live in profound peace. But it is one of the prettiest and most characteristic towns of Holland. The wide

streets are traversed by canals shaded by double rows of trees. On either side are red, purple, and pink cottages with white pointing, which seem content in their cleanliness. At every crossway two or three corresponding bridges of stone or of wood, with white railings, meet each other; the only thing to be seen is some barge lying motionless and apparently enjoying the delight of idleness; there are few people stirring, the doors are closed, and all is still.

I took my way toward the new church, looking around to see if I could discover any of the famous storks' nests, but there were none visible. The tradition of the storks of Delft is still alive, and no traveller writes about this city without mentioning it. Guicciardini calls it "a memorable fact of such a nature that peradventure there is no record of a like event in ancient or modern times." The circumstance took place during the great fire which destroyed nearly the whole city. There were in Delft a countless number of storks' nests. It must be remembered that the stork is the favorite bird of Holland, the bird of good augury, like the swallow. Storks are much in demand, as they make war on toads and rats, and the peasants plant perches surmounted by large wooden disks to attract them to build their nests there. In some towns they are to be seen walking through the streets. Well, at Delft there were innumerable nests. When the fire began,

on the 3d of May, the young storks were well grown, but they could not yet fly. When they saw the fire approaching, the parent storks tried to carry their little ones into a place of safety, but they were too heavy, and after every sort of desperate effort the poor birds, worn and terrified, had to abandon the attempt. They might yet have saved themselves by leaving the young to their fate, as human beings generally do under similar circumstances. But, instead, they remained on their nests, pressing their little ones round them, and shielding them with their wings, as though to delay their destruction for at least a moment. Thus they awaited their death, and were found lifeless in this attitude of love and devotion. Who knows whether during the horrible terror and panic of the fire the example of that sacrifice, the voluntary martyrdom of those poor mothers, may not have given courage to some weaker soul about to abandon those who had need of him?

In the great square, where stands the new church, I again saw some shops like those I had seen in Rotterdam, in which all the articles which can be strung together are hung up either outside the door or in the room, so forming wreaths, festoons, and curtains—of shoes, for example, or of earthen pots, watering-cans, baskets, and buckets—which dangle from the ceiling to the ground, and sometimes almost hide the floor. The shop signs are like those at Rotterdam—a bottle of beer hanging from a nail, a paint-brush, a box, a

broom, and the customary huge heads with wide-open mouths.

The new church, founded toward the end of the fourteenth century, is to Holland what Westminster Abbey is to England. It is a large edifice, sombre without and bare within—a prison rather than a house of God. The tombs are at the end, behind the enclosure of the benches.

I had scarcely entered before I saw the splendid mausoleum of William the Silent, but the sexton stopped me before the very simple tomb of Hugh Grotius, the *prodigium Europæ*, as the epitaph calls him, the great jurisconsult of the seventeenth century—that Grotius who wrote Latin verses at the age of nine, who composed Greek odes at eleven, who at fourteen indited philosophical theses, who three years later accompanied the illustrious Barneveldt in his embassy to Paris, where Henry IV. presented him to his court, saying, "Behold the miracle of Holland!" that Grotius who at eighteen years of age was illustrious as a poet, as a theologian, as a commentator, as an astronomer, who had written a poem on the town of Ostend which Casaubon translated into Greek measures and Malesherbes into French verse; that Grotius who when hardly twenty-four years old occupied the post of advocate-general of Holland and Zealand, and composed a celebrated treatise on the *Freedom of the Seas;* who at thirty years of age was an honorary councillor of Rotterdam. Afterward,

when, as a partisan of Barneveldt, he was persecuted, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and shut up in the castle of Löwestein, he wrote his treatise on the *Rights of Peace and War*, which for a long time was the code of all the publicists of Europe. He was rescued in a marvellous way by his wife, who managed to be carried into the prison inside a chest supposed to be full of books, and sent back the chest with her husband inside, while she remained in prison in his place. He was then sheltered by Louis XIII., was appointed ambassador to France by Christina of Sweden, and finally returned in triumph to his native land, and died at Rostock crowned with glory and a venerable old age.

The mausoleum of William the Silent is in the middle of the church. It is a little temple of black and white marble, heavy with ornament and supported by slender columns, in the midst of which rise four statues representing Liberty, Prudence, Justice, and Religion. Above the sarcophagus is a recumbent statue of the prince in white marble, and at his feet the effigy of the little dog that saved his life at Mechlin by barking one night, when he was sleeping under a tent, just as two Spaniards were advancing stealthily to kill him. At the foot of this statue rises a beautiful bronze figure, a Victory, with outspread wings, resting lightly on her left foot. At the opposite side of the little temple is another bronze statue representing William seated. He is clad in

Monument to Admiral Van Tromp,
Delft.

armor, with his head uncovered and his helmet at his feet. An inscription in Latin tells that this monument was consecrated by the States of Holland "to the eternal memory of that William of Nassau whom Philip II., the terror of Europe, feared, yet whom he could neither subdue nor overthrow, but whom he killed by execrable fraud." William's children are laid by his side, and all the princes of his dynasty are buried in the crypt under his tomb.

Before this monument even the most frivolous and careless visitor remains silent and thoughtful.

It is well to recall the tremendous struggle of which the hero lies in that tomb.

On one side was Philip II., on the other William of Orange. Philip II., shut up in the dull solitude of the Escurial, lived in the midst of an empire which included Spain, North and South Italy, Belgium, and Holland, and, in Africa, Oran, Tunis, the archipelagoes of the Cape Verde and Canary Islands; in Asia the Philippine Islands; and the Antilles, Mexico, and Peru in America. He was the husband of the queen of England, the nephew of the emperor of Germany, who obeyed him as if he were a vassal; he was the lord, one may say, of all Europe, for the neighboring states were all weakened by political and religious disorders; he had at his command the best disciplined soldiers in Europe, the greatest generals of the age, American gold, Flemish industries, Italian science, an army of spies scattered through all the

courts—men chosen from all countries fanatically devoted to him, conscious or unconscious tools of his will. He was the most sagacious, most mysterious prince of his age; he had everything that enchains, corrupts, alarms, and attracts the world—arms, riches, glory, genius, religion. While every one else was bowing low before this formidable man, William of Orange stood erect.

This man, without a kingdom and without an army, was nevertheless more powerful than the king. Like him, he had been a disciple of Charles V., and had learned the art of elevating thrones and hurling them down; like him, he was cunning and inscrutable, and yet he divined the future with keener intellectual vision than Philip. Like his enemy, he had the power of reading men's souls, but he also had the ability to win their hearts. He had a good cause to uphold, but he was acquainted with all the artifices that are used to maintain bad causes. Philip II., who spied into every one's affairs, was spied on in his turn and had his purposes divined by William. The designs of the great king were discovered and thwarted before they were put into execution; mysterious hands ransacked his drawers and pockets and investigated his secret papers. William in Holland read the mind of Philip in the Escurial; he anticipated, hindered, and embroiled all his plots; he dug the ground from beneath his feet, provoked him, and then escaped, only to return before his eyes like a phantom which he

saw and could not seize, which he seized and could not destroy. At last William died, but even when dead the victory was his, and the enemy who survived was defeated. Holland remained for a short time without a head, but the Spanish monarchy had received such a blow that it was not able to rise again.

In this wonderful struggle the figure of the Great King gradually dwindles until it entirely disappears, while that of William of Orange becomes greater and greater by slow degrees until it grows to be the most glorious figure of his age. From the day when, as a hostage to the king of France, he discovered Philip's design of establishing the Inquisition in the Netherlands he devoted himself to defend the liberty of his country, and throughout his life he never wavered for a moment on the road he had entered. The advantages of his noble birth, a regal fortune, peace, and the splendid life which by habit and nature were dear to him, all these he sacrificed to the cause; he was reduced to poverty and exiled, yet in both poverty and exile he constantly refused the offers of pardon and of favor that were made from many sides and in many ways by the enemy who hated and feared him. Surrounded by assassins, made the target of the most atrocious calumnies, accused of cowardice before the enemy, and charged with the assassination of a wife whom he adored, sometimes regarded with distrust, slandered, and at-

tacked by the very people he was defending,—he bore it all patiently and in silence. He did not swerve from the straight course to the goal, facing infinite perils with quiet courage. He did not bend before his people nor did he flatter them; he did not permit himself to be led away by the passions of his country; it was he who always guided; he was always at the head, always the first. All gathered around him; he was the mind, the conscience, and the strength of the revolution, the hearth that burned and kept the warmth of life in his fatherland. Great by reason alike of his audacity and prudence, he continued upright in a time full of perjury and treachery; he remained gentle in the midst of violent men; his hands were spotless when all the courts of Europe were stained with blood. With an army collected at random, with feeble or uncertain allies, checked by internal discords between Lutherans and Calvinists, nobles and commoners, magistrates and the people, with no great general to aid him, he was obliged to combat the municipal spirit of the provinces, which would none of his authority and escaped from his control; yet he triumphed in a conflict which seemed beyond human strength. He wore out the Duke of Alva, Requesens, Don John of Austria, and Alexander Farnese. He overthrew the conspiracies of those foreign princes who wished to help his country in order to subdue it. He gained friends and obtained aid from every part of Europe, and,

after achieving one of the noblest revolutions in history, he founded a free state in spite of an empire which was the terror of the universe.

This man, who in the eyes of the world was so terrible and so great, was an affectionate husband and father, a pleasant friend and companion, who loved merry social gatherings and banquets, and was an elegant and polite host. He was a man of learning, and spoke, besides his native language, French, German, Spanish, Latin, and Italian, and conversed in a scholarly manner on all subjects. Although called the Silent (rather because he kept to himself the secret discovered at the French court than from a habit of silence), he was one of the most eloquent men of his time. His manners were simple and his dress plain; he loved his people and was beloved by them. He walked about the streets of the cities bareheaded and alone, and chatted with workmen and fishermen, who offered him drink out of their glasses; he listened to their discourses, settled their quarrels, entered their homes to restore domestic concord. Every one called him "Father William," and, in fact, he was the father rather than a son of his country. The feeling of admiration and gratitude which still lives for him in the hearts of the Hollanders has all the intimacy and tenderness of filial affection; his reverend name is still in every mouth; his greatness, stripped of every ornament and veil, remains entire, spotless, and steadfast like his work.

After seeing the tomb of the Prince of Orange I went to look upon the place where he was assassinated.

In 1580, Philip II. published an edict in which he promised a reward of twenty-five thousand golden pieces and a title of nobility to the man who would assassinate the Prince of Orange. This infamous edict, which stimulated covetousness and fanaticism, caused crowds of assassins to gather from every side, who surrounded William under false names and with concealed weapons, awaiting their opportunity. A young man from Biscay, Jaureguy by name, a fervent Catholic, who had been promised the glory of martyrdom by a Dominican friar, made the first attempt. He prepared himself by prayer and fasting, went to Mass, took the communion, covered himself with sacred relics, entered the palace, and, drawing near to the prince in the attitude of one presenting a petition, fired a pistol at his head. The ball passed through the jaw, but the wound was not mortal. The Prince of Orange recovered. The assassin was slain in the act by sword and halberd thrusts, then quartered on the public square, and the parts were hung up on one of the gates of Antwerp, where they remained until the Duke of Parma took possession of the town, when the Jesuits collected them and presented them as relics to the faithful.

Shortly after this another plot against the life of the Prince was discovered. A French nobleman, an Italian, and a Walloon, who had followed him for

some time with the intention of murdering him, were suspected and arrested. One of them killed himself in prison with a knife, another was strangled in France, and the third escaped, after he had confessed that the movements of all three had been directed by the Duke of Parma.

Meanwhile Philip's agents were overrunning the country instigating rogues to perpetrate this deed with promises of treasures in reward, while priests and monks were instigating fanatics to the same end by the assurance of help and reward from Heaven. Other assassins made the attempt. A Spaniard was discovered, arrested, and quartered at Antwerp; a rich trader called Hans Jansen was put to death at Flushing. Many offered their services to Prince Alexander Farnese and were encouraged by gifts of money. The Prince of Orange, who knew all this, felt a vague presentiment of his approaching death, and spoke of it to his intimate friends, but he refused to take any precautions to protect his life, and replied to all who gave him such counsel, "It is useless: God has numbered my years. Let it be according to His will. If there is any wretch who does not fear death, my life is in his power, however I may guard it."

Eight attempts were made upon his life before an assassin fired the fatal shot.

When the deed was at last committed, in 1584, four scoundrels, an Englishman, a Scotchman, a

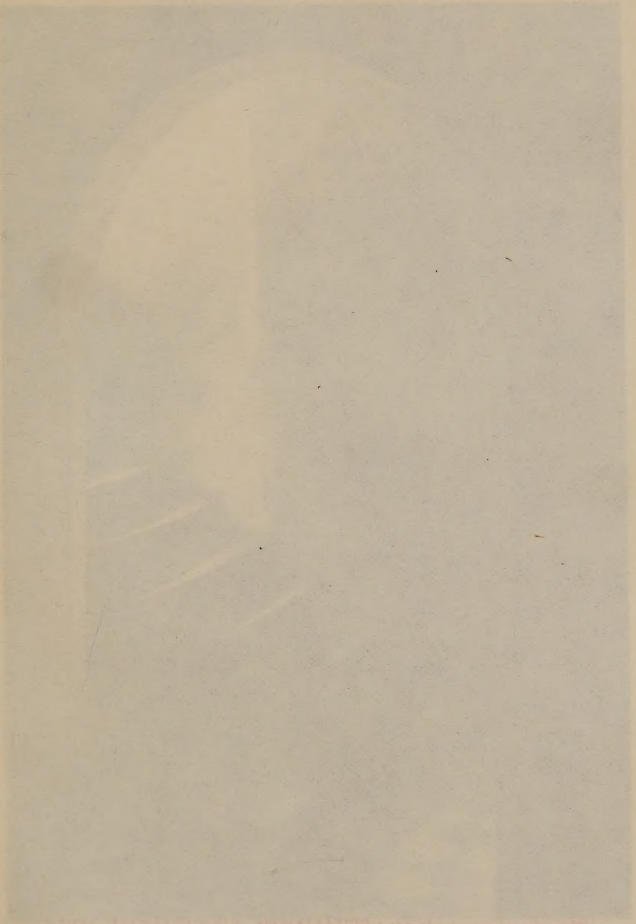
Frenchman, and a man of Lorraine, unknown to each other, were all awaiting at Delft their opportunity to assassinate him.

Besides these, there was a young conspirator, twenty-seven years of age, from Franche-Comté, a Catholic, who passed himself off as a Protestant, Guyon by name, the son of a certain Peter Guyon who was executed at Besançon for embracing Calvinism. This Guyon, whose real name was Balthazar Gerard, was believed to be a fugitive from the persecutions of the Catholics. He led an austere life and took part in all the services of the Evangelical Church, and in a short time acquired a reputation for especial piety. Saying that he had come to Delft to beg for the honor of serving the Prince of Orange, he was recommended and introduced by a Protestant clergyman: he inspired the Prince with confidence, and was sent by him to accompany Herr Van Schonewalle, the envoy of the States of Holland to the court of France. In a short time he returned to Delft, bringing to William the tidings of the death of the Duke of Anjou, and presented himself at the convent of St. Agatha, where the Prince was staying with his court. It was the second Sunday in July. William received him in his chamber, being in bed. They were alone. Balthazar Gerard was probably tempted to assassinate him at that moment, but he was unarmed and restrained himself. Disguising his impatience, he quietly answered all the questions he

was asked. William gave him some money, told him to prepare to return to Paris, and ordered him to come back the next day to get his letters and passport. With the money he received from the Prince, Gerard bought two pistols from a soldier, who killed himself when he knew to what end they had been used, and the next day, the 10th of July, he again presented himself at the convent of St. Agatha. William, accompanied by several ladies and gentlemen of his family, was descending the staircase to dine in a room on the ground floor. On his arm was the Princess of Orange, his fourth wife, that gentle and unfortunate Louisa de Coligny, who had seen her father, the admiral, and her husband, Seigneur de Teligny, killed at her feet on the eve of St. Bartholomew. Balthazar stepped forward, stopped the Prince, and asked him to sign his passport. The Prince told him to return later, and entered the dining-room. No shade of suspicion had passed through his mind. Louisa de Coligny, however, grown cautious and suspicious by her misfortunes, became anxious. That pale man, wrapped in a long mantle, had a sinister look; his voice sounded unnatural and his face was convulsed. During dinner she confided her suspicions to William, and asked him who that man was "who had the wickedest face she had ever seen." The Prince smiled, told her it was Guyon, reassured her, and was as gay as ever during the dinner. When he had finished he quietly left the room to go

up stairs to his apartments. Gerard was waiting for him at a dark turning near the staircase, hidden in the shadow of a door. As soon as he saw the Prince approaching he advanced, and leaped upon him just as he was placing his foot on the second step. He fired his pistol, which was loaded with three bullets, straight at the Prince's breast, and fled. William staggered and fell into the arms of an equerry. All crowded round. "I am wounded," said William in a feeble voice. . . . "God have mercy on me and on my poor people!" He was all covered with blood. His sister, Catherine of Schwartzburg, asked, "Dost thou commend thy soul to Jesus Christ?" He answered, in a whisper, "I do." It was his last word. They placed him on one of the steps and spoke to him, but he was no longer conscious. They then bore him into a room near by, where he died.

Gerard had crossed the stables, had fled from the convent, and reached the ramparts of the town, from which he hoped to leap into the moat and swim across to the opposite bank, where a horse ready saddled was awaiting him. But in his flight he let fall his hat and a pistol. A servant and a halberdier in the Prince's service, seeing these traces, rushed after him. Just as he was in the act of jumping he stumbled, and his two pursuers overtook and seized him. "Infernal traitor!" they cried. "I am no traitor," he answered calmly; "I am a faithful servant of my master."—"Of what master?" they asked. "Of



Stairway where William, the Silent, was Assassinated, in the Prinsenhof, Delft.

my lord and master the King of Spain," answered Gerard. By this time other halberdiers and pages had come up. They dragged him into the town, beating him with their fists and with the hilts of their swords. The wretch, thinking from the words of the crowd that the Prince was not dead, exclaimed with an evil composure, "Cursed be the hand whose blow has failed!"

This deplorable peace of mind did not desert him for a moment. When brought before the judges, during the long examination in the cell where he was thrown laden with chains, he still maintained the same remarkable tranquillity. He bore the torments to which he was condemned without letting a cry escape him. Between the various tortures to which he was subjected, while the officers were resting, he conversed quietly and in a modest manner. While they were lacerating him every now and then he raised his bloody head from the rack and said, "Ecce homo." Several times he thanked the judges for the nourishment he had received, and wrote his confessions with his own hand.

He was born at Villefranche in the department of Burgundy, and studied law with a solicitor at Dôle, and it was there that he for the first time manifested his wish to kill William. Planting a dagger in a door, he said, "Thus would I thrust a sword into the breast of the Prince of Orange!" Three years later, hearing of the proclamation of Philip II., he went

to Luxembourg, intending to assassinate the Prince, but was stopped by the false report of his death which had been spread after Jaurequy's attempted assassination. Soon after, learning that William still lived, he renewed his design, and went to Mechlin to seek counsel from the Jesuits, who encouraged him, promising him a martyr's crown if he lost his life in the enterprise. He then went to Tournay, and presented himself to Alexander Farnese, who confirmed the promises of King Philip. He was approved and encouraged by the confidence of the Prince and by the priests; he fortified himself by reading the Bible, by fasting and prayer, and then, full of religious exaltation, dreaming of angels and of Paradise, he left for Delft, and completed his "duty as a good Catholic and faithful subject."

He repeated his confessions several times to the judges, without one word of remorse or penitence. On the contrary, he boasted of his crime, and said he was a new David, who had overthrown a new Goliath; he declared that if he had not already killed the Prince of Orange, he should still wish to do the deed. His courage, his calmness, his contempt of life, his profound belief that he had accomplished a holy mission and would die a glorious death, dismayed his judges; they thought he must be possessed by the devil. They made inquiries, they questioned him, but he always gave the same answer that his conversation was with God alone.

He was sentenced on the 14th of July. His punishment has been called a crime against the memory of the great man whose death it was intended to avenge—a sentence to turn faint any one who had not superhuman strength.

The assassin was condemned to have his hand enclosed and seared in a tube of red-hot iron, to have his arms, legs, and thighs torn to pieces with burning pincers, his bowels to be quartered, his heart to be torn out and thrown into his face, his head to be dissevered from his trunk and placed on a pike, his body to be cut in four pieces, and every piece to be hung on a gibbet over one of the principal gates of the city.

On hearing the enumeration of these horrible tortures the miserable wretch did not flinch; he showed no sign of terror, sorrow, or surprise. He opened his coat, bared his breast, and, fixing his dauntless eyes on his judges, he repeated with a steady voice his customary words, "Ecce homo!"

Was this man only a fanatic, as many believed, or a monster of wickedness, as others held, or was he both of these inspired by a boundless ambition?

On the next day the sentence was carried into effect. The preparations for the execution were made before his eyes; he regarded them with indifference. The executioner's assistant began by pounding into pieces the pistol with which he had perpetrated the crime. At the first blow the head of the hammer fell off and struck another assistant on the

ear. The crowd laughed, and Gerard laughed too. When he mounted the gallows his body was already horrible to behold. He was silent while his hand crackled and smoked in the red-hot tube; during the time when the red-hot tongs were tearing his flesh he uttered no cry; when the knife penetrated into his entrails he bowed his head, murmured a few incomprehensible words, and expired.

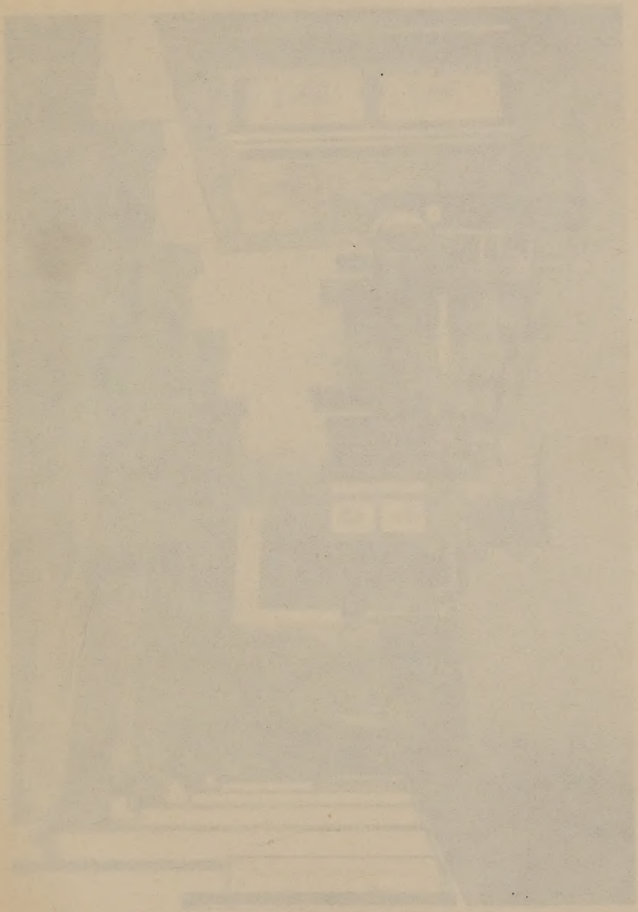
The death of the Prince of Orange filled the country with consternation. His body lay in state for a month, and the people gathered round his last bed kneeling and weeping. The funeral was worthy of a king: there were present the States General of the United Provinces, the Council of State, and the Estates of Holland, the magistrates, the clergy, and the princes of the house of Nassau. Twelve noblemen bore the bier, four great nobles held the cords of the pall, and the Prince's horse followed splendidly caparisoned and led by his equerry. In the midst of the train of counts and barons there was seen a young man, eighteen years of age, who was destined to inherit the glorious legacy of the dead, to humble the Spanish arms, and to compel Spain to sue for a truce and to recognize the independence of the Netherlands. That young man was Maurice of Orange, the son of William, on whom the Estates of Holland a short time after the death of his father conferred the dignity of Stadtholder, and to whom they afterward entrusted the supreme command of the land and naval forces.

While Holland was mourning the death of the Prince of Orange, the Catholic priesthood in all the cities under Spanish rule were rejoicing over the assassination and extolling the assassin. The Jesuits exalted him as a martyr, the University of Louvain published his defence, the canons of Bois-le-Duc chanted a Te Deum. After a few years the King of Spain bestowed on Gerard's family a title and the confiscated property of the Prince of Orange in Burgundy.

The house where William was murdered is still standing: it is a dark-looking building with arched windows and a narrow door, and forms part of the cloister of an old cathedral consecrated to St. Agatha. It still bears the name of Prinsenhof, although it is now used for artillery barracks. I got permission to enter from the officer on guard. A corporal who understood a little French accompanied me. We crossed a courtyard full of soldiers, and arrived at the memorable place. I saw the staircase the Prince was mounting when he was attacked, the dark corner where Gerard hid himself, the door of the room where the unfortunate William dined for the last time, and the mark of the bullets on the wall in a little whitewashed space which bears a Dutch inscription reminding one that here died the father of his country. The corporal showed me where the assassin had fled. While I was looking round, with that pensive curiosity that one feels in places where great

crimes have been committed, soldiers were ascending and descending; they stopped to look at me, and then went away singing and whistling; some near me were humming; others were laughing loudly in the courtyard. All this youthful gayety was in sharp and moving contrast to the sad gravity of those memories, and seemed like a festival of children in the room where died a grandparent whose memory we cherish.

Opposite the barracks is the oldest church in Delft. It contains the tomb of the famous Admiral Tromp, the veteran of the Dutch navy, who saw thirty-two naval battles, and in 1652, at the battle of the Downs, defeated the English fleet commanded by Blake. He re-entered his country with a broom tied to the mast-head of the admiral's ship to indicate that he had swept the English off the seas. Here also is the tomb of Peter Heyn, who from a simple fisherman rose to be a great admiral, and took that memorable net-ful of Spanish ships that had under their hatches more than eleven million florins; also the tomb of Leuwenhoek, the father of the science of the infinitely small—who, with the "divining-glass," as Parini says, "saw primitive man swimming in the genital wave." The church has a high steeple surmounted by four conical turrets. It is inclined like the Tower of Pisa, because the ground has sunk beneath it. Gerard was imprisoned in one of the cells of this tower on the night of the assassination.



Refectory of the Convent of St. Agatha, Delft.

At Rotterdam I had been given a letter to a citizen of Delft asking him to show me his house. The letter read: "He desires to penetrate into the mysteries of an old Dutch house; lift for a moment the curtain of the sanctuary." The house was not hard to find, and as soon as I saw it I said to myself, "That is the house for me!"

It was a red cottage, one story in height, with a long peaked gable, situated at the end of a street which stretched out into the country. It stood almost on the edge of a canal, leaning a little forward, as if it wished to see its reflection in the water. A pretty linden tree grew in front which spread over the window like a great fan, and a drawbridge lay before the door. Then there were the white curtains, the green doors, the flowers, the looking-glasses—in fact, it was a perfect little model of a Dutch house.

The road was deserted. Before I knocked at the door I waited a little while, looking at it and thinking. That house made me understand Holland better than all the books I had read. It was at the same time the expression and the reason of the domestic love, of the modest desires, and the independent nature of the Dutch people. In our country there is no such thing as the true house: there are only divisions in barracks, abstract habitations, which are not ours, but in which we live hidden, but not alone, hearing a thousand noises made by people who are strangers to us, who disturb our sorrows with the echo of their joys and

interrupt our joys with the echo of their sorrows. The real home is in Holland—a house of one's own, quite separate from others, modest, circumspect, and, by reason of its retirement, unknown to mysteries and intrigues. When the inhabitants of the house are merry, everything is bright; when they are sad, all is serious. In these houses, with their canals and drawbridges, every modest citizen feels something of the solitary dignity of a feudal lord, and might imagine himself the commander of a fortress or the captain of a ship; and indeed, as he looks from his windows, as from those of an anchored vessel, he sees a boundless level plain, which inspires him with just such sentiments of freedom and solemnity as are awakened by the sea. The trees that surround his house like a green girdle allow only a delicate broken light to enter it; boats freighted with merchandise glide noiselessly past his door; he does not hear the trampling of horses or the cracking of whips, or songs or street-cries; all the activities of the life that surrounds him are silent and gentle: all breathes of peace and sweetness, and the steeple of the church hard by tells the hour with a flood of harmony as full of repose and constancy as are his affections and his work.

I knocked at the door, and the master of the house opened it. He read the letter which I gave him, regarded me critically, and bade me enter. It is almost always thus. At the first meeting the Dutch

are apt to be suspicious. We open our arms to any one who brings us a letter of introduction as if he were our most intimate friend, and very often do nothing for him afterward. The Dutch, on the contrary, receive you coldly—so coldly, indeed, that sometimes you feel mortified—but afterward they do a thousand things for you with the best will in the world, and without the least appearance of doing you a kindness.

Within, the house was in perfect harmony with its outside appearance; it seemed to be the inside of a ship. A circular wooden staircase, shining like polished ebony, led to the upper rooms. There were mats and carpets on the stairs, in front of the doors, and on the floors. The rooms were as small as cells, the furniture was as clean as possible, the door-plates, the knobs, the nails, the brass and the other metal ornaments were as bright as if they had just left the hands of the burnisher. Everywhere there was a profusion of porcelain vases, of cups, lamps, mirrors, small pictures, bureaus, cupboards, knicknacks, and small objects of every shape and for every use. All were marvellously clean, and bespoke the thousand little wants that the love of a sedentary life creates —the careful foresight, the continual care, the taste for little things, the love of order, the economy of space; in short, it was the abode of a quiet, domestic woman.

The goddess of this temple, who could not or did

not dare speak French, was hidden in some inmost recess which I did not succeed in discovering.

We went down stairs to see the kitchen; it was one gleam of brightness. When I returned home I described it, in my mother's presence, to the servant who prided herself on her cleanliness, and she was annihilated. The walls were as white as snow; the saucepans reflected everything like so many looking-glasses; the top of the chimney-piece was ornamented by a sort of muslin curtain like the curtains of a bed, bearing no trace of smoke; the wall below the chimney was covered with square majolica tiles which were as clean as though the fire had never been lighted; the andirons, shovel, and tongs, the chain of the spit, all seemed to be of burnished steel. A lady dressed for a ball could have gone round the room and into all the corners and touched everything without getting a speck of dirt on her spotless attire.

At this moment the maid was cleaning the room, and my host spoke of this as follows: "To have an idea of what cleanliness means with us," he said, "one ought to watch the work of these women for an hour. Here they scrub, wash, and brush a house as if it were a person. A house is not cleaned; it has its toilette made. The girls blow between the bricks, they rummage in the corners with their nails and with pins, and clean so minutely that they tire their eyes no less than their arms. Really it is a national passion. These girls, who are generally so phlegmatic, change

their character on cleaning day and become frantic. That day we are no longer masters of our houses. They invade our rooms, turn us out, sprinkle us, turn everything topsy-turvy; for them it is a gala day; they are like bacchantes of cleanliness; the madness grows as they wash." I asked him to what he attributed this species of mania for which Holland is famous. He gave me the same reasons that many others had given; the atmosphere of their country, which greatly injures wood and metals, the damp, the small size of the houses and the number of things they contain, which naturally makes it difficult to keep them clean, the superabundance of water, which helps the work, a something that the eye seems to require, until cleanliness ends by appearing beautiful, and, lastly, the emulation that everywhere leads to excess. "But," he added, "this is not the cleanest part of Holland; the excess, the delirium of cleanliness, is to be seen in the northern provinces."

We went out for a walk about the town. It was not yet noon; servants were to be seen everywhere dressed just like those in Rotterdam. It is a singular thing, all the servant-maids in Holland, from Rotterdam to Groningen, from Haarlem to Nimeguen, are dressed in the same color—light mauve, flowered or dotted with stars or crosses—and while engaged in cleaning they all wear a sort of invalid's cap and a pair of enormous white wooden shoes. At first I thought that they formed a national association re-

quiring uniformity in dress. They are generally very young, because older women cannot bear the fatigue they have to endure; they are fair and round, with prodigious posterior curves (an observation of Diderot); in the strict sense of the word they are not at all pretty, but their pink and white complexions are marvellous, and they look the picture of health, and one feels that it would be delightful to press one's cheek to theirs. Their rounded forms and fine coloring are enhanced by their plain style of dress, especially in the morning, when they have their sleeves turned up and necks bare, revealing flesh as fair as a cherub's.

Suddenly I remembered a note I had made in my book before starting for Holland, and I stopped and asked my companion this question: "Are the Dutch servants the eternal torment of their mistresses?"

Here I must make a short digression. It is well known that ladies of a certain age, good mothers and good housekeepers, whose social position does not allow them to leave their servants to themselves—who, for instance, have only one servant, who has to be both cook and lady's maid,—it is well known that such ladies often talk for hours on this subject. The conversations are always the same—of insupportable defects, insolence that they have had to endure, impertinent answers, dishonesty in buying the things needed for the kitchen, of waste, untruthfulness, immense pretensions, of discharges, of the annoyance

of searching for new servants, and other such calamities; the refrain always being that the honest and faithful servants, who became attached to the family and grew old in the same service, have ceased to exist; now one is obliged to change them continually, and there is no way of getting back to the old order. Is this true or false? Is it a result of the liberty and equality of classes, making service harder to bear and the servants more independent? Is it an effect of the relaxation of manners and of public discipline, which has made itself felt even in the kitchen? However it may be, the fact remains that at home I heard this subject so much discussed that one day, before I left for Spain, I said to my mother, "If anything in Madrid can console me in being so far from my family, it will be that I shall hear no more of this odious subject." On my arrival at Madrid I went into a hostelry, and the first thing the landlady said was that she had changed her maids three times in a month, and was driven to desperation: she did not know which saint to pray to: and so long as I remained there the same lamentation continued. On my return home I told my family about it; they all laughed, and my mother concluded that there must be the same trouble in every country. "No," said I, "in the northern countries it must be different."—"You will see that I am right," my mother answered. I went to Paris, and of the first housekeeper with whom I became acquainted I asked

the question, "Are the servants here the everlasting torment of their mistresses, as they are in Italy and Spain?"—"*Ah! mon cher monsieur*," she answered, clasping her hands and looking above her, "*ne me parlez pas de ça!*" Then followed a long story of quarrels, and discharging of servants, and of trials which mistresses have to endure. I wrote the news to my mother, and she answered, "We shall see in London."

I went to London, and on the ship which was bearing me to Antwerp I entered into conversation with an English lady. After we had exchanged a few words, and I had explained the reason of my curiosity, I asked the usual question. She turned away her head, put her hand to her forehead, and then replied, emphasizing each word, "They are the *flagellum Dei!*"

I wrote home in despair, suggesting however, that I still trusted in Holland, which was a peaceful country, where the houses were so tidy and clean and the home-life so sweet. My mother answered that she thought we might possibly make an exception of Holland. But we were both rather doubtful. My curiosity was aroused, and she was expecting the news from me; for this reason, therefore, I put the question to my courteous guide at Delft. It may be imagined with what impatience I awaited his reply.

"Sir," answered the Dutchman after a moment's reflection, "I can only give you this reply: in Hol-

land we have a proverb which says that the maids are the cross of our lives."

I was completely discouraged.

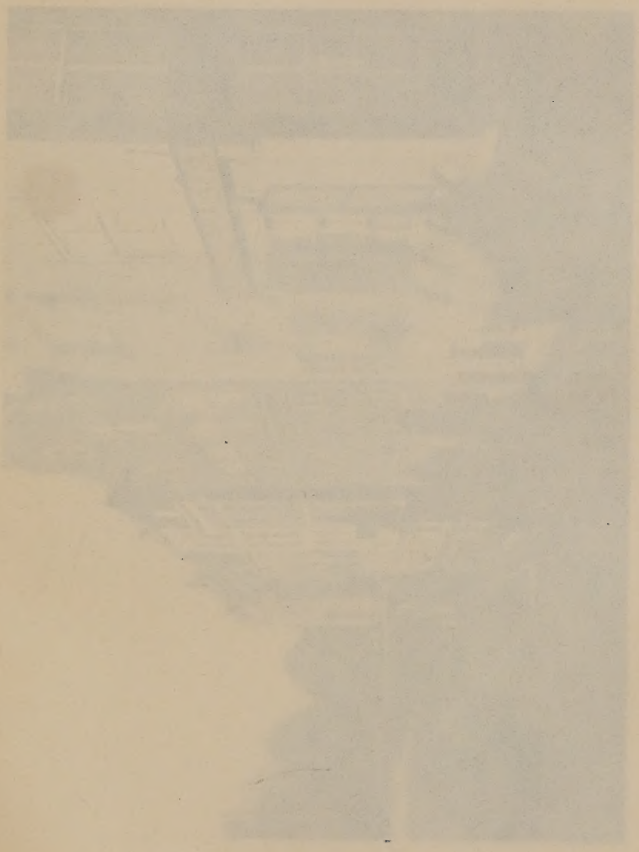
"First of all," he continued, "the annoyance of living in a large house is, that we are obliged to keep two servants, one for the kitchen and one for cleaning, since it is almost impossible, with the mania they have of washing the very air, that one servant can do both things. Then they have an unquenchable thirst for liberty: they insist on staying out till ten in the evening and on having an entire holiday every now and then. Moreover, their sweethearts must be allowed in the house, or they come to fetch them; we must let them dance in the streets, and they are up to all sorts of mischief during the Kirmess festival. Moreover, when they are discharged we are obliged to wait until they choose to go, and sometimes they delay for months. Add to this account, wages amounting to ninety or a hundred florins a year, as well as the payment of a certain percentage on all the bills the master pays, tips from all invited guests, and all sorts of especial presents of dress-goods and money from the master, and, above all and always, patience, patience, patience!"

I had heard enough to speak with authority to my mother, and I turned the conversation to a less distressing subject.

On passing a side street I observed a lady approach a door, read a piece of paper attached to it, make a

gesture of distress, and pass on. A moment later another woman who was passing, also paused, read it, and went on. I asked my companion for an explanation, and he told me of a very curious Dutch custom. On that piece of paper was written the notice that a certain sick person was worse. In many towns of Holland, when any one is ill, the family posts such a bulletin on the door every day, so that friends and acquaintances are not obliged to enter the house to learn the news. This form of announcement is adopted on other occasions also. In some towns they announce the birth of a child by tying to the door a ball covered with red silk and lace, for which the Dutch word signifies a proof of birth. If the child is a girl, a piece of white paper is attached; if twins are born, the lace is double, and for some days after the appearance of the symbol a notice is posted to the effect that the mother and child are well and have passed a good night, or the contrary if it is otherwise. At one time, when there was the announcement of a birth on a door the creditors of the family were not allowed to knock for nine days; but I believe this custom has died out, although it must have had the beneficent virtue of promoting an increase in the population.

In that short walk through the streets of Delft I met some gloomy figures like those I had noticed at Rotterdam, without being able to determine whether they were priests, magistrates, or gravediggers, for



Old Delft.

SPECIALITE

in their dress and appearance they bore a certain resemblance to all three. They wore three-cornered hats, with long black veils which reached to the waist, swallow-tailed black coats, short black breeches, black stockings, black cloaks, buckled shoes, and white cravats and gloves, and they held in their hands sheets of paper bordered with black. My companion explained to me that they were called *aanspreckers*, an untranslatable Dutch word, and that their duty was to bear the information of deaths to the relatives and friends of the defunct and to make the announcement through the streets. Their dress differs in some particulars in the various provinces and also according to the religious faith of the deceased. In some towns they wear immense hats *à la* Don Basilio. They are generally very neat, and are sometimes dressed with a care that contrasts strangely with their business as messengers of death, or, as a traveller defines them, living funeral letters.

We noticed one of these men who had stopped in front of a house, and my companion drew my attention to the fact that the shutters were partly closed, and observed that there must be some one dead there. I asked who it was. "I do not know," he replied, "but, to judge from the shutters, it cannot be any near relative to the master of the house." As this method of arguing seemed rather strange to me, he explained that in Holland when any one dies in a family they shut the windows and one, two, or

three of the divisions of the folding shutters accordingly as the relationship is near or distant. Each section of shutter denotes a degree of relationship. For a father or mother they close all but one, for a cousin they close one only, for a brother two, and so on. It appears that the custom is very old, and it still continues, because in that country no custom is discontinued for caprice; nothing is changed unless the alteration becomes a matter of serious importance, and unless the Hollanders have been more than persuaded that such a change is for the better.

I should like to have seen at Delft the house where was the tavern of the artist Steen, where he probably passed those famous debauches which have given rise to so many questions among his biographers. But my host told me that nothing was known about it. However, apropos of painters, he gave me the pleasing information that I was in the part of Holland, bounded by Delft, the Hague, the sea, the town of Alkmaar, the Gulf of Amsterdam, and the ancient Lake of Haarlem, which might be called the fatherland of Dutch painting, both because the greatest painters were born there, and because it presented such singularly picturesque effects that the artists loved and studied it devotedly. I was therefore in the bosom of Holland, and when I left Delft, I was going into its very heart.

Before leaving I again glanced hastily over the military arsenal, which occupies a large building, and

which originally served as a warehouse to the East India Company. It is in communication with an artillery workshop and a great powder-magazine outside of the town. At Delft there still remains the great polytechnic school for engineers, the real military academy of Holland, for from it come forth the officers of the army that defends the country from the sea, and these young warriors of the dykes and locks, about three hundred in number, are they who give life to the peaceful town of Grotius.

As I was stepping into the vessel which was to bear me to the Hague, my Dutch friend described the last of those students' festivals at Delft which are celebrated once in five years. It was one of those pageants peculiar to Holland, a sort of historical masquerade like a reflection of the magnificence of the past, serving to remind the people of the traditions, the personages, and illustrious events of earlier times. A great cavalcade represented the entrance into Arnheim, in 1492, of Charles of Egmont, Duke of Gelderland, Count of Zutphen. He belonged to that family of Egmont which in the person of the noble and unfortunate Count Lamoral gave the first great martyr of Dutch liberty to the axe of the Duke of Alva. Two hundred students on richly caparisoned horses, clothed in armor, decorated with mantles embroidered with coats of arms, with waving plumes and large swords proudly brandished, formed the retinue of the Duke of Gelderland. Then came

halberdiers, archers, and foot-soldiers dressed in the pompous fashion of the fifteenth century; bands played, the city blazed with lights, and through its streets flowed an immense crowd, which had come from every part of Holland to enjoy this splendid vision of a distant age.

THE HAGUE.

THE HAGUE.

The boat that was to carry me to the Hague was moored near a bridge, in a little basin formed by the canal which leads from Delft to the Hague, and shaded by trees on the bank like a garden lake.

The boats that carry passengers from town to town are called in Dutch *trekschuiten*. The *trekschuit* is the traditional boat, as emblematic of Holland as is the gondola of Venice. Esquiros defined it as "the genius of ancient Holland floating on the waters;" and, in fact, any one who has not travelled in a *trekschuit* is not acquainted with Dutch life under its most original and poetic aspect.

It is a large boat, almost entirely covered with a cabin shaped like a stage-coach and divided into two compartments—the division near the prow being for second-class passengers, and that near the poop for first-class. An iron pole with a ring at the end is fastened to the prow, through which a long rope is passed; this is tied at one end near the rudder and at the other end is fastened a tow-horse, which is ridden by a boatman. The windows of the cabin have white curtains; the walls and doors are painted. In

the compartment for first-class passengers there are cushioned seats, a little table with books, a cupboard, a mirror; everything is neat and bright. In putting down my valise I allowed some ashes from my cigar to fall under the table; a minute later, when I returned, these had disappeared.

I was the only passenger, and did not have to wait long; the boatman made a sign, the tow-boy mounted his horse, and the *trekschuit* began to glide gently down the canal.

It was about an hour past noon and the sun was shining brightly, but the boat passed along in the shade. The canal is bordered by two rows of linden trees, elms, willows, and high hedges on either side, which hide the country. It seemed as though we were sailing across a forest. At every curve we saw green enclosed views in the distance, with windmills here and there on the bank. The water was covered with a carpet of aquatic plants, and in some parts strewn with white flowers, with iris, water-lilies, and the water-lentil. The high green hedge bordering the canal was broken here and there, allowing a glimpse, as if through a window, of the far-off horizon of the champaign; then the walls would close again in an instant.

Every now and then we encountered a bridge. It was pleasant to see the rapidity with which the man on horseback and another man, who was always on guard, handled the cords to let the *trekschuit* pass, and how the two conductors made room for each other

On the Canal, near Delft.

On the Canal, near Delft.

when two *trekschuiten* met, the one passing his rope under that of the other without speaking a word, without greeting each other even with a smile, as if gravity and silence were obligatory. All along the way the only sound to be heard was the whirring of the arms of the windmills.

We met barges laden with vegetables, peat, stones, and barrels, and drawn with a long tow-rope by men, who were sometimes aided by large dogs with cords round their necks. Some were towed by a man, a woman, and a boy, one behind the other, with the rope tied to a sort of girth made of leather or linen. All three would be leaning forward so far that it was hard to understand how they managed to keep their feet, even with the help of the rope. Other boats were towed by old women alone. On many, a woman with a child at her breast would be seen at the rudder; other children were grouped around, and one might see a cat sitting on a sack, a dog, a hen, pots of flowers, and bird-cages. On some women sat knitting stockings and rocking the cradle at the same time; on others they were cooking; sometimes all the members of the family, excepting the one who was towing, were eating in a group. The look of peace that beams from the faces of those people and the tranquil appearance of those aquatic houses, of those animals which in a certain measure have become amphibious, the serenity of that floating life, the air of security and freedom of those wandering and soli-

tary families,—these are not to be described. Thus in Holland live thousands of families who have no other houses but their boats. A man marries, and the wedded couple buy a boat, make it their home, and carry merchandise from one market to another. Their children are born on the canals; they are bred and grow up on the water; the barge holds their household goods, their small savings, their domestic memories, their affections, their past, and all their present happiness and hopes for the future. They work, save, and after many years buy a larger boat, and sell their old house to a poorer family or give it to their eldest son, who from some other boat takes a wife, at whom he has glanced for the first time in an encounter on the canal. Thus from barge to barge, from canal to canal, life passes silently and peacefully, like the wandering boat which shelters it and the slow water that accompanies it.

For some time I saw only small peasants' houses on the banks; then I began to see villas, pavilions, and cottages half hidden among the trees, and in the shadiest corners fair-haired ladies dressed in white, seated book in hand, or some fat gentleman enveloped in a cloud of smoke with the contented air of a wealthy merchant. All of these little villas are painted rose-color or azure; they have varnished tile roofs, terraces supported by columns, little yards in front or around them, with tidy flower-beds and neatly-kept paths; miniature gardens,

clean, closely trimmed, and well tended. Some houses stand on the brink of the canal with their foundations in the water, allowing one to see the flowers, the vases, and the thousand shining trifles in the rooms. Nearly all have an inscription on the door which is the aphorism of domestic happiness, the formula of the philosophy of the master, as—"Contentment is Riches," "Pleasure and Repose;" "Friendship and Society;" "My Desires are Satisfied;" "Without Weariness;" "Tranquil and Content;" "Here we Enjoy the Pleasures of Horticulture." Now and then a fine black-and-white cow, lying on the bank on a level with the water, would raise her head quietly and look toward the boat. We met flocks of ducks, which paddled off to let us pass. Here and there, to the right and left, there were little canals almost covered by two high hedges, with branches intertwining overhead which formed a green archway, under which the little boats of the peasants darted and disappeared in the shadows. From time to time, in the midst of all this verdure, a group of houses would suddenly come into view, a neat many-colored little village, with its looking-glasses and its tulips at the windows, and without a sign of life. This profound silence would be broken by a merry chime from an unseen steeple. It was a pastoral paradise, a landscape of idyllic beauty breathing freshness and mystery—a Chinese Arcadia, with quaint corners, little surprises, and innocent artifices

of prettiness, all which seemed like so many low voices of invisible beings murmuring, "We are content."

At a certain point the canal divides into two branches, of which one hides itself amongst the trees and leads to Leyden, and the other turns to the left and leads to the Hague. After we passed this point the *trekschuit* began to stop, first at a house, then at a garden-gate, to receive parcels, letters, and verbal messages to be carried to the Hague.

An old gentleman came on board from a villa and took a seat near me. He spoke French, and we entered into conversation. He had been in Italy, knew some words of Italian, and had read "I Promessi Sposi." He asked me for particulars in regard to the death of Alessandro Manzoni. After ten minutes I adored him. He gave me an account of the *trekschuit*. To appreciate the poetry of this national boat it is necessary to take long journeys in company with some Dutch people. Then they all live just as if they were at home; the women work, the men smoke on the roof; they dine all together, and after dinner they loiter about on the deck to see the sun set; the conversation grows very intimate, and the company becomes a family. Night comes on. The *trekschuit* passes like a shadow through villages steeped in silence, glides along the canals bathed in the silver light of the moon, hides itself in the thickets, reappears in the open country, grazes

the lonely houses from which beams the light of the peasant's lamp, and meets the boats of fishermen, which dart past like phantoms. In that profound peace, lulled by the slow and equal motion of the boat, men and women fall asleep side by side, and the boat leaves nothing in its wake save the confused murmur of the water and the sound of the sleepers' breathing.

As we went on our way gardens and villas became more frequent. My travelling companion showed me a distant steeple, and pointed out the village of Ryswick, where in 1697 was signed the celebrated treaty of peace between France, England, Spain, Germany, and Holland. The castle of the Prince of Orange, where the treaty was signed, is no longer standing. An obelisk has been erected on its site.

Suddenly the *trekschuit* emerged from the trees, and I saw before me an extended plain, a large woodland, and a city crowned with towers and windmills.

It was the Hague.

The boatman asked me to pay my fare, and received the money in a leather bag. The driver urged on the horse, and in a few minutes we were in town. After a quarter of an hour I found myself in a spotless room in the Hôtel du Maréchal de Turenne. Who knows? It may have been the very room in which the celebrated Marshal slept as a young man when he was in the service of the house of Orange.

The Hague—in Dutch 'SGravenhage or 'SHage—the political capital, the Washington of Holland, whose New York is Amsterdam—is a city that is partly Dutch and partly French. It has wide streets without canals, vast wooded squares, grand houses, splendid hotels, and a population composed in great part of wealthy citizens, nobles, public officers, men of letters, and artists; in a word, a much more refined populace than that of any of the other cites of Holland.

What most impressed me in my first walk round the city were the new quarters where dwells the flower of the moneyed aristocracy. In no other city, not even in the Faubourg St. Germain in Paris, had I ever felt myself such a poor devil as in those streets. They are wide and straight, with small palaces on either side: these are artistic in design and harmonious in coloring, with large windows without blinds, through which one can see the carpets, vases of flowers, and the sumptuous furniture of the rooms on the ground floor. All the doors were closed, and not a shop was to be seen, not an advertisement on the walls, not a stain nor a straw could be found, if one had a hundred eyes. When I passed through the streets there was a profound silence. Now and then an aristocratic carriage rolled past me almost noiselessly over the brick pavement, or I saw some stiff lackey standing at a door, or the fair head of some lady behind a curtain. As I walked

close to the windows, I could see out of the corner of my eye my shabby travelling-clothes reflected clearly in the large panes of glass, and I repented not having brought my gloves, and felt a certain sense of humiliation because I was not at least a knight by birth. It seemed to me that now and then I could hear soft voices saying, "Who is that beggar?"

The most noteworthy part of the old town is the Binnenhof, a group of old buildings in different styles of architecture, which overlook two wide squares on two sides and a large pool on the third side. In the midst of this group of palaces, towers, and monumental doors, of a gloomy mediæval appearance, is a spacious courtyard which may be entered by three bridges and three doors. In one of those buildings the Stadtholders lived. It is now the Second Chamber of the States General; opposite to it are located the First Chamber, the rooms of the Ministry, and the other offices of public administration. The Minister of the Interior has his office in a little, low, black, gloomy tower which leans slightly toward the water of the pool.

The Binnenhof, the Buitenhof (a square extending to the west), and the Plaats (another square on the other side of the pool, which is reached by passing under an old door that once formed part of a prison) were the scenes of the most bloody events in the history of Holland.

In the Binnenhof the venerable Van Olden Barne-

veldt was beheaded. He was the second founder of the republic, the most illustrious victim of the long struggle between the patrician burghers and the Stadtholders, between the republican and monarchical principles, which so terribly afflicted Holland. The scaffold was erected in front of the building where sat the States General. Opposite was the tower from which, they say, Maurice of Orange, unseen, assisted at the execution of his enemy. In the prison between the two squares was tortured Cornelius de Witt, who was unjustly accused of plotting against the life of the Prince of Orange. The furious populace dragged Cornelius and John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary, into the Plaats all wounded and bleeding, and there they were spit upon, kicked, and slaughtered with pike and pistol, and afterward their corpses were mutilated and defiled. In the same square Adelaide de Poelgeest, the mistress of Albert, Count of Holland, was stabbed on the 22d of September in the year 1392, and the stone on which she expired is still shown.

These sad memories and those heavy low doors, that irregular group of dark buildings, which at night, when the moon lights up the stagnant pool, have the appearance of an enormous inaccessible castle standing in the midst of the joyous and cultured city,—arouse a feeling of awful sadness. At night the courtyard is lighted only by an occasional lamp; the few people who pass through it quicken

their pace as if they are afraid. There is no sound of steps to be heard, no lighted windows to be seen; one enters it with a vague restlessness, and leaves it almost with pleasure.

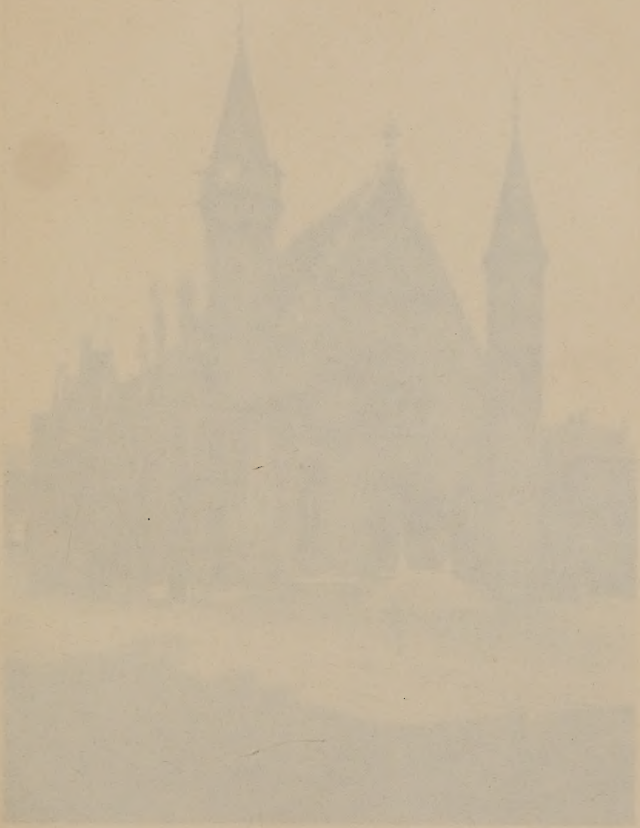
With the exception of the Binnenhof, the Hague has no important monuments ancient or modern. There are several mediocre statues of the Princes of Orange, a vast, naked cathedral, and a royal palace of modest proportions. On many of the public buildings storks are carved, the stork being the heraldic animal of the city. Many of these birds walk about freely in the fish-market—they are kept at the expense of the municipality, like the bears of Berne and the eagles of Geneva.

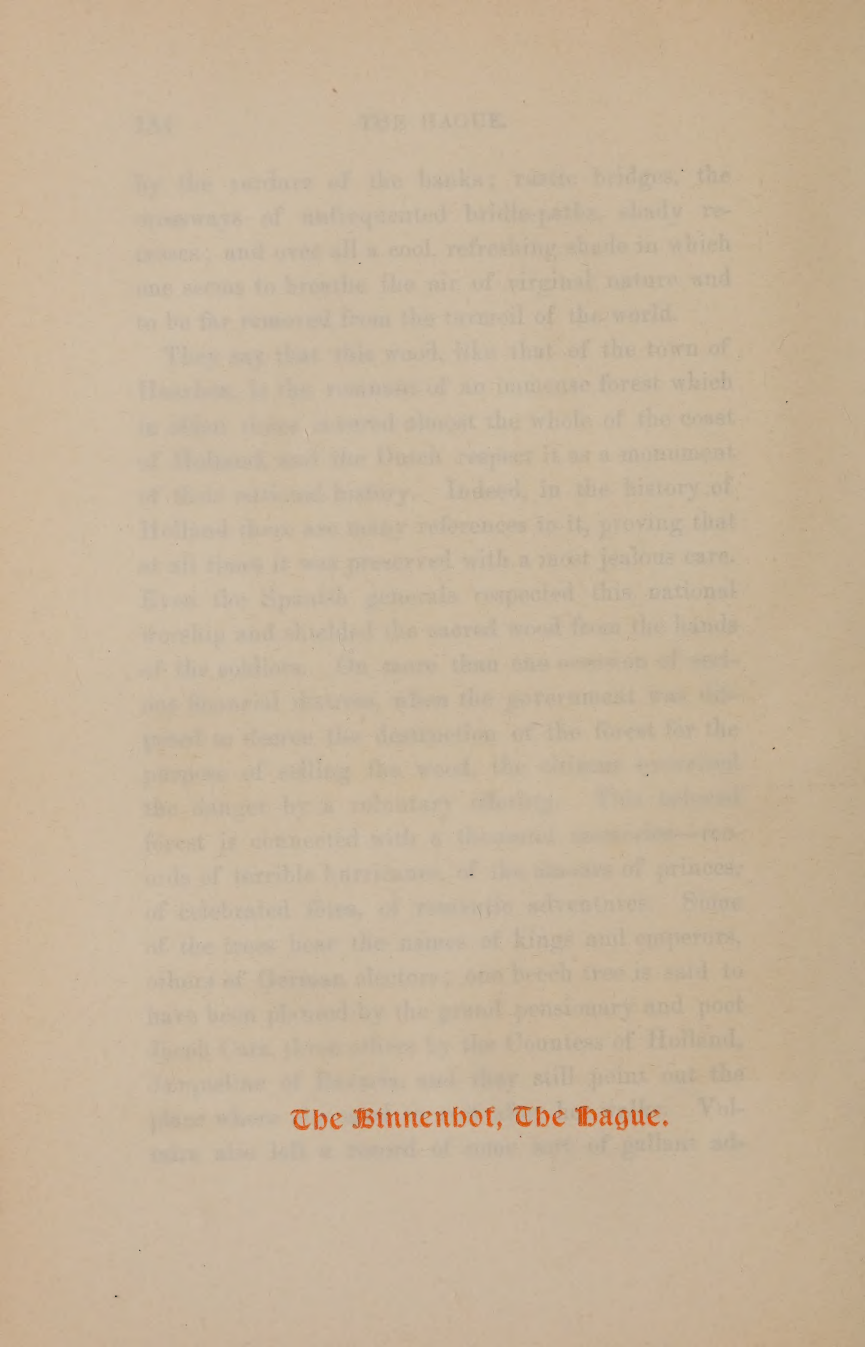
The greatest ornament of the Hague is its forest, which is one of the wonders of Holland and one of the most magnificent parks in the world.

It is composed of alders, oaks, and the largest beech trees to be found in Europe. It is more than a French league in circumference, and is situated to the east of the city, only a few steps from the last houses. It is a really delightful oasis in the midst of the depressing Dutch plains. When one has entered the wood and passed beyond the fringe of pavilions, little Swiss cottages, and summer houses dotted about among the first trees, one seems to have lost one's self in a lonely interminable forest. The trees are as thick as a canebrake, the avenues are lost in the dusk; there are lakes and canals almost hidden

by the verdure of the banks; rustic bridges, the crossways of unfrequented bridle-paths, shady recesses; and over all a cool, refreshing shade in which one seems to breathe the air of virginal nature and to be far removed from the turmoil of the world.

They say that this wood, like that of the town of Haarlem, is the remnant of an immense forest which in olden times covered almost the whole of the coast of Holland, and the Dutch respect it as a monument of their national history. Indeed, in the history of Holland there are many references to it, proving that at all times it was preserved with a most jealous care. Even the Spanish generals respected this national worship and shielded the sacred wood from the hands of the soldiers. On more than one occasion of serious financial distress, when the government was disposed to decree the destruction of the forest for the purpose of selling the wood, the citizens exorcised the danger by a voluntary offering. This beloved forest is connected with a thousand memories—records of terrible hurricanes, of the amours of princes, of celebrated fêtes, of romantic adventures. Some of the trees bear the names of kings and emperors, others of German electors; one beech tree is said to have been planted by the grand pensionary and poet Jacob Catz, three others by the Countess of Holland, Jacqueline of Bavaria, and they still point out the place where she used to rest after her walks. Voltaire also left a record of some sort of gallant ad-





The Binnenhof, The Hague.

venture which he had with the daughter of a hair-dresser.

In the centre of the forest, where the underbrush seems determined to conquer everything and springs up, piling itself into heaps, climbing the trees, creeping across the paths, extending over the water, restraining one's steps and hiding the view on every side, as if it wished to conceal the shrine of some forgotten sylvan divinity,—at this spot is hidden a small royal palace, called the House-in-the-Wood, a sort of *Casa del Labrador* of the Villa Aranjuez. It was erected in 1647 by Princess Amalia of Solms, in honor of her husband, Frederick Henry, the Stadtholder.

When I went to visit this palace, while my eyes were busy searching for the visitors' door, I saw a lady with a noble and benevolent face come out and get into her carriage. I took her for some English traveller who had brought her visit to a close. As the carriage passed near me, I raised my hat; the lady bowed her head and disappeared.

A moment later one of the ladies in waiting at the palace told me that this "traveller" was no one less than Her Majesty the Queen of Holland.

I felt my blood flow faster. The word *queen*, independently of the person to whom it referred, has always had this effect on me, although I cannot explain the reason of it. Perhaps because it reminds me of certain bright, confused visions of my youth. The romantic imagination of a boy of fifteen is some-

times content to tread the ground, and sometimes it climbs with eager audacity to a giddy height. It dreams of supernatural beauty, of intoxicating perfumes, of consuming love, and imagines that all these are comprised in the mysterious and inaccessible creatures that fortune has placed at the summit of the social scale. And among the thousand strange, foolish, and impossible fancies that enter his mind he dreams of scaling towering walls in the dark with youthful agility, of passing formidable gates and deep ditches, of opening mysterious doors, threading interminable corridors amidst people overcome with sleep, of stepping silently through immense saloons, of ascending aërial staircases, mounting the stones of a tower at the risk of his life, reaching an immense height over the tall trees of moonlit gardens, and at last of arriving, fainting and bleeding, beneath a balcony, and hearing a superhuman voice speak in accents of deep pity, of answering with equal tenderness, of bursting into tears and invoking God, of leaning his forehead on the marble and covering with desperate kisses a foot flashing with gems, of abandoning his face in the perfumed silks, and of feeling his reason flee and life desert him in an embrace more than human.

In this palace, called the House-in-the-Wood, besides other remarkable things, is an octagonal room, the walls of which from floor to ceiling are covered with paintings by the most celebrated artists of the

school of Rubens, among which is a huge allegorical painting by Jordaens which represents the apotheosis of Frederick Henry. There is a room filled with valuable presents from the Emperor of Japan, the Viceroy of Egypt, and the East India Company; and an elegant little room decorated with designs in chiaroscuro, which even when closely examined are taken for bas-reliefs. These are the work of Jacob de Wit, a painter who at the beginning of the last century won great fame in this art of delusion. The other rooms are small, and handsome without display; they are full of the treasures of a refined taste, as becomes the great and modest house of Orange.

The custom of allowing strangers to enter the palace the moment after the queen came out seemed strange to me, but it did not surprise me when I learned of other customs and other popular traits, and in a word the character of the royal family of Holland.

In Holland the sovereign is considered as a stadtholder rather than as a king. He has in him, as a certain Spanish republican said of the Duke of Aosta, the least quantity possible in a king. The sentiment of the Dutch nation toward their royal family is not so much a feeling of devotion to the family of the monarch as affection for the house of Orange, which has shared its triumphs and taken part in its misfortunes—which has lived its life for three centuries. At bottom, the country is republican, and its monarchy

is a sort of crowned presidency void of regal pomp. The king makes speeches at the banquets and at the public festivals as the ministers do with us, and he enjoys the fame of an orator because his speeches are extemporary: his voice is very powerful, and his eloquence has a martial ring, which arouses great enthusiasm among the people. The crown prince, William of Orange, studied at the University of Leyden, passed the public examinations, and took his degree as a lawyer; Prince Alexander, the second son, is now studying at the same university. He is a member of the Students' Club, and invites his professors and fellow-students to dinner. At the Hague, Prince William enters the cafés, converses with his neighbors, and walks about the streets with his young gentlemen friends. In the wood the queen will seat herself on a bench beside any poor old woman, nor can one say she does this, like other princes, to acquire popularity; for that the house of Orange can neither gain nor lose, since there is not in the nation (although it is republican by nature and tradition) the least sign of a faction that desires a republic or even pronounces its name. On the other hand, the people, who love and venerate their king, who at the festivals celebrated in his honor will remove the horses and themselves draw his carriage, who insist on every one wearing an orange-colored cockade in homage to the name of Orange,—in ordinary times do not occupy themselves

at all about his affairs and family. At the Hague I had some trouble to learn what grade the crown prince holds in the army. One of the first librarians in the town, to whom I put my question, was astonished at my curiosity, which to him seemed childish, and he told me that probably I could not have found a hundred people in the Hague who would have been able to answer my question.

The seat of the court is at the Hague, but the king passes a large part of the summer in one of his castles in Gelderland, and every year spends some days in Amsterdam. The people say there is a law which obliges the king to spend ten days during the year at Amsterdam, and the municipality of that town are obliged to pay his expenses during those ten days. After midnight of the tenth day even a match that he may strike to light his cigar is at his own expense.

On returning from the royal villa at the Hague I found the wood enlivened by the Sunday promenade —music, carriages, a crowd of ladies, restaurants full of people, and swarms of children everywhere.

Then for the first time I saw the fair sex of Holland. Beauty is a rare flower in Holland, as in all other countries; notwithstanding, in a walk of a hundred steps in the wood at the Hague I saw many more beautiful women than I had seen in all the pictures in the Dutch galleries. These ladies do not possess the statuesque beauty of the Romans, the

splendid color of the English, nor the vivacity of the Andalusians; but there is about them a refinement, a delightful innocence and grace, a tranquil beauty, a pleasing countenance; they have, as a French writer has rightly said, the attraction of the valerian flower which ornaments their gardens. They are plump, and tall rather than short, they have regular features, and smooth brilliant complexions of a beautiful white and delicate pink—colors which seem to have been suffused by the breath of an angel; they have high cheek-bones; their eyes are light blue, sometimes very light, and sometimes of a glassy appearance, which gives them a vague, wandering look. It is said that their teeth are not good, but this I could not confirm, as they seldom laugh. They walk more heavily than the French and not so stiffly as the English; they dress in the Parisian mode, and the ladies at the Hague display better taste than those at Amsterdam, although they do not dress so richly: they all display their masses of fair hair with considerable pride.

I was astonished to see girls who appeared to be fully grown, who in our country would have had the airs and attire of women, still dressed like children, with short skirts and white pantalettes. In Holland, where life is easy and impatience an unknown experience, the girls are in no hurry to leave off the ways and appearance of childhood, and, on the other hand, they seem naturally to enter at a comparatively late age

that period of life when, as Alessandro Manzoni says in his ever-admirable way, it seems as though a mysterious power enters the soul, which soothes, adorns, and invigorates all its inclinations and thoughts. Here a girl very rarely marries before her twentieth year. I need not speak of the children of the Deccan, who, it is said, are married at eight years of age, but in Holland the Italian and Spanish girls, who marry at fourteen or fifteen, are regarded as unaccountable persons. There, girls of fifteen years are going to school with their hair down their backs, and nobody thinks of looking at them. I heard a young man of the Hague spoken of with horror by his friends because he was enamoured of a maiden of this age, for to their minds she was considered as an infant.

Another thing one notices instantly in every Dutch city, excepting Amsterdam, is the absence of that lower stratum of society known as the demi-monde. There is nothing in dress or manner to indicate the existence of such a class. "Beware," said some freethinking Dutchmen to me; "you are in a Protestant country, and there is a great deal of hypocrisy." This may be true, but the sore that can be hidden cannot be very large. Equivocal society does not exist among the Hollanders; there is no shadow of it in their life nor any hint of it in their literature; the very language rebels against translating any of those numberless expressions which constitute the

dubious, flashy, easy speech of that class of society in the countries where it is found. On the other hand, neither fathers nor mothers close their eyes to the conduct of their unmarried sons, even if they be grown men; family discipline makes no exception of long beards; and this strict discipline is aided by their phlegmatic nature, their habits of economy, and their respect for public opinion.

It would be a presumption more ridiculous than impertinent to speak of the character and life of Dutch women with an air of experience, when I have been only a few months in Holland; so I must content myself with letting my Dutch friends speak for themselves.

Many writers have treated Dutch women discourteously. One calls them apathetic housekeepers; another, who shall be nameless, carried impertinence so far as to say that, like the men, they are in the habit of choosing their lovers from among the servant class, and that their aspirations are necessarily low. But these are judgments dictated by the rage of some rejected suitors. Daniel Stern (Comtesse d'Agoult), who as a woman speaks with particular authority on this subject, says the women of Holland are noble, loyal, active, and chaste. A few authors venture to doubt their much-talked-of calmness in affection. "They are still waters," wrote Esquiros, and all know what is said of still waters. Heine said they were frozen volcanoes, and that when they

thaw— But, of all the opinions I have read, the most remarkable seems to me that of Saint Evremont— namely, that Dutch women are not lively enough to disturb the repose of the men, that some of them are certainly amiable, and that prudence or the coldness of their nature stands them in stead of virtue.

One day, in a group of young men at the Hague, I quoted this opinion of Saint Evremont, and bluntly demanded: "Is it true?" They smiled, looked at each other, and one answered, "It is:" another, "I think so;" and a third, "It may be." In short, they all admitted its truth. On another occasion I collected evidence proving that matters stand just as they were at the time of the French writer. A group of people were discussing an odd character. "Yet," said one, "that little man who seems so quiet in his manner is a great ladies' man." "Does he disturb the repose of families?" I asked. They all began to laugh, and one answered: "What! Disturb the repose of families in Holland? It would be one of the twelve labors of Hercules."—"We Hollanders," a friend once said to me, "do not take the ladies by storm; we cannot do so, because we have no school of this art. Nothing is so false in Holland as the famous definition, matrimony is like a besieged fortress; those who are outside wish to enter, while those who are inside wish they were out. Here those who are inside are very happy, and those who are outside do not think of entering." Another

said to me, "The Dutch woman does not marry the man; she espouses matrimony." This, which is true of the Hague, an elegant city to which there comes a great influx of French civilization, is even truer of the other towns, where the ancient customs have been more strictly adhered to. Yet gallant travellers write that the Hollanders are a sleepy people, and that their domestic happiness is "*un bonheur un peu gros.*" The woman who seldom goes out, who dances little and laughs less, who occupies herself only with her children, her husband, and her flowers, who reads her books on theology, and surveys the street with the looking-glass, so that she need not show herself at the window, how much more poetical is she than— But pardon me, Andalusia! I was about to say something rather hard on you.

Hitherto, some readers may think that I have been pretending to know the Dutch language. I hasten to say that I do not know it, and to excuse my ignorance. A people like the Dutch, serious and tactiturn, richer in hidden qualities than in brilliant showy ones—a people who are, if I may so express myself, self-contained rather than superficial, who do much and talk little, who do not pass for more than they are worth—may be studied without a knowledge of their language. On the other hand, the French language is generally known in Holland. In the large cities there is scarcely an educated person who does not speak French correctly, scarcely a shopman who

cannot make himself understood in good or bad French, and there is scarcely a boy who is not acquainted with ten or twenty words which suffice to help a stranger out of a dilemma. This diffusion of a language so different from that of the country is the more to be admired when one reflects that it is not the only foreign language generally spoken in Holland. English and German are almost as widely known as French. The study of these three languages is obligatory in the secondary schools. Cultured people, like those who in Italy think it a necessity to know French, in Holland generally read English, German, and French with equal facility. The Dutch have an especial talent for learning languages, and an incredible courage in speaking them. We Italians before we attempt to speak a foreign language require to know enough about it to avoid making great mistakes; we blush when we do make them; we avoid the opportunities of speaking until we are sure of speaking well enough to be complimented, and in this way we continue to lengthen the period of our philological novitiate. In Holland one often meets people who speak French with great effort, with a vocabulary of perhaps a hundred words and twenty sentences; but notwithstanding they talk, hold long conversations, and do not seem to be at all worried about what one may think of their blunders and their audacity. Waiters, porters, and boys, when asked if they know French, answer with the greatest assur-

ance, "*Oui*" or "*Un peu*," and they try in a thousand ways to make themselves understood, laughing themselves sometimes at the eccentric contortion of their speech, and ending every answer with "*S'il vous plait*" or a "*Pardon, monsieur;*" which are often said so prettily and yet are so out of place that they make one laugh even against one's will. It is considered such a common thing to know French that when any one is obliged to answer that he doesn't speak French, he hesitates, ashamed, and if he is interrogated in the street he will pretend to be busy and hurry on.

As for the Dutch language, it is a mystery to those who do not know German, and even when one knows German and can read Dutch books with a little study, one cannot understand Dutch when it is spoken. If I were asked to say what impression it makes on those who do not understand it, I should say that it seems like German spoken by people with a hair in their throats. This effect is produced by the frequent repetition of a guttural aspirate which is like the sound of the Spanish *jota*. Even the Dutch themselves do not consider their language euphonious. I was often asked, playfully, "What impression does it make on you?" as if they understood that the impression could not be altogether agreeable. Yet some one has written a book proving that Adam and Eve spoke Dutch in the Garden of Eden. But, although the Dutch speak so many foreign languages,

they hold to their own, and grow indignant when any ignorant stranger shows that he believes Dutch to be a German dialect, this being, in truth, a theory held by many who only know the language by name. It is almost superfluous to repeat the history of the language.

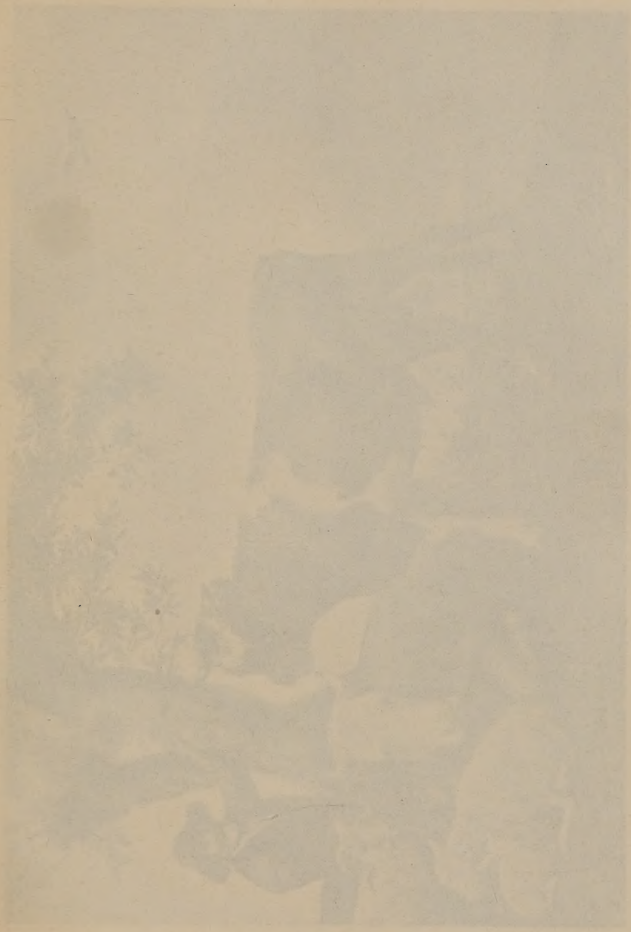
The first inhabitants of the country spoke Teutonic in its different dialects. These dialects were blended and formed the ancient speech of the Netherlands, which in the Middle Ages, like the other European languages, passed through the different Germanic, Norman, and French phases, and ended in the present Dutch language, in which there is still a foundation of the primitive idiom and the evidence of a slight Latin influence. Certainly, there is a striking similarity between Dutch and German, and, above all, there are a number of root-words common to the two; but there is, however, a great difference in the grammar, that of the Dutch being much simpler in construction, and the pronunciation also is very different. This very likeness is the reason that the Dutch generally do not speak German so well as they speak English or French; perhaps the difficulty may be caused by the ambiguity of words, or because it costs them so little effort to understand the language and to speak it for their own use that they stop there, as we often do with French, which we speak at ten years of age and have forgotten at forty.

Now it is time to go and visit the art gallery, which is the greatest ornament of the Hague.

On entering we find ourselves at once before the most celebrated of all painted animals, Paul Potter's "Bull"—that immortal bull which, as has been said, was honored at the Louvre, when the mania arose of classifying these pictures in a sort of hierarchy of celebrity, by being placed near the "Transfiguration" of Raphael, the "St Peter the Martyr" of Titian, and the "Communion of St. Jerome" by Domenichino; that bull for which England would pay a million francs, and Holland would not sell for double that sum; the bull on which more pages have been written than the strokes of the artist on the canvas, and about which critics still write and dispute as if it were a real living creation of a new animal instead of a picture.

The subject of the picture is very simple—a life-size bull, standing with his head turned toward the spectator, a cow lying on the ground, some sheep, a shepherd, and a distant landscape.

The supreme merit of this bull may be expressed in one word: it is alive. The serious wondering eye, which gives the impression of vigorous vitality and savage pride, is painted with such truth that at the first sight one feels inclined to dodge to the right or left, as one does in a country road when one meets such animals. His moist black nostrils seem to be smoking, and to be drawing in the air with a pro-



Paul Potter's Bull

longed breath. His hide is painted with all its folds and wrinkles; one can see where the animal has rubbed himself against the trees and the ground; the hairs look as though they are stuck on the canvas. The other animals are equally fine: the head of the cow, the fleece of the sheep, the flies, the grass, the leaves and fibres of the plants, the moss,—everything is rendered with extraordinary fidelity. Although the infinite care the artist must have taken is apparent, the fatigue and patience of the copy do not appear; it seems almost an inspired, impetuous work, in which the painter, impelled by a thirst for truth, has not felt a moment of hesitation or weariness. Infinite criticisms were made on this "incredible stroke of audacity by a young man of twenty-four." The large size of the canvas was censured, the commonplace nature of the subject, the poverty of the light effects, for the light is equally diffused and everything is placed in relief without the contrast of shadow,—the stiffness of the legs of the bull, the crude coloring of the plants and animals in the background; the mediocrity of the shepherd's figure. But, for all this, Paul Potter's bull was crowned with glory as one of the noblest examples of art, and Europe considers it as the greatest work of the prince of animal-painters. An illustrious critic very rightly said that "Paul Potter with his bull has written the true idyl of Holland."

Herein is the great merit of the Dutch animal-

painters, and of Potter above all, that they have not only depicted animals, but have revealed, and told in the poetry of color, the delicate, attentive, almost maternal love with which this Dutch agricultural people cherish their cattle. Potter's animals interpret the poetry of rural life. By them he has expressed the silence and the peace of the meadows, the pleasure of solitude, the sweetness of repose, and the satisfaction of patient toil. One might almost say that he had succeeded in making himself understood by them, and that they must have put themselves in positions to be copied. He has given them the variety and attractiveness of human beings. The sadness, the quiet content which follows the satisfaction of physical needs, the sensations of health and strength, of love and gratitude toward mankind, all the glimmerings of intelligence and the stirrings of affection, all the variety of nature—all these he has understood and expressed with loving fidelity, and he has further succeeded in communicating to us the feelings by which he was animated. As we look at his pictures a strange primitive instinct of a rural life is gradually roused in us—an innocent desire to milk, to shear, to drive these gentle patient animals that delight the eye and heart. In this art Paul Potter is unsurpassed. Berghem is more refined, but Potter is more natural; Van de Velde is more graceful, but Potter is more vigorous; Du Jardin is more amiable, but Potter is more profound.

And to think that the architect who afterward became his father-in-law would not at first give him his daughter, because he was only a painter of animals! and if we may believe tradition his celebrated bull served as a sign to a butcher's shop and sold for twelve hundred and sixty francs.

Another masterpiece in the Hague Gallery is a small painting by Gerard Dou, the painter of the celebrated "Dropsical Woman," which hangs in the Louvre between pictures by Raphael and Murillo. He is one of the greatest painters of the home-life of the Dutch, and the most patient of the patient artists of his country. The picture simply represents a woman seated near a window, with a cradle by her side; but in this humble scene there is such a sweet and holy air of domestic peace, a repose so profound, a love so harmonious, that the most obstinate bachelor on earth could not look on it without feeling an irresistible desire to be the one for whom the wife is waiting in that quiet, clean room, or at least to enter it secretly for a moment, even though he remain hidden in the shadow, if so he might breathe the perfume of the innocent happiness of this sanctuary. This picture, like all the works of Dou, is painted with that wonderful finish which he carries almost to excess, which was certainly carried to excess by Slingelandt, who worked three years continuously in painting the Meerman family. This style afterward degenerated into that smooth, affected, painful man-

nerism where the figures are like ivory, the skies enamel, and the fields velvet, of which Van der Werff is the best known representative. Among other things to be seen in this picture by Dou is a broom-handle, the size of a pen-holder, on which they say the artist worked assiduously for three days. This does not seem strange when we reflect that every minute filament, the grain, the knots, spots, dents, and finger-marks are all reproduced. Anecdotes of his superhuman patience are recounted which are scarcely credible. It is said he was five days in copying the hand of a Madam Spirings whose portrait he painted. Who knows how long he was painting her head? The unhappy creatures who wished to be painted by him were driven to madness. It is believed that he ground his colors himself, and made his own brushes, and that he kept everything hermetically closed, so that no particle of dust could reach his work. When he entered his studio he opened the door slowly, sat down with great deliberation, and then remained motionless until the least sign of agitation produced by the exercise had ceased. Then he began to paint, using concave glasses to reduce the objects in size. This continual effort ended by injuring his sight, so that he was obliged to work with spectacles. Nevertheless, his coloring never became weakened or less vigorous, and his pictures are equally strong whether one looks at them near by or far off. They have been very justly com-

pared to natural scenes reduced in photographs. Dou was one of the many disciples of Rembrandt who divided the inheritance of his genius. From his master he learned finish and the art of imitating light, especially the effects of candle-light and of lamps. Indeed, as we shall see in the Amsterdam Gallery, he equalled Rembrandt in these respects. He possessed the rare merit among the painters of his school in that he took no pleasure in painting ugliness and trivial subjects.

In the gallery at the Hague home-life is represented by Dou, by Adriaen van Ostade, by Steen, and by Van Mieris the elder.

Van Ostade—called the Rembrandt of home-life, because he imitated the great master in his powerful effects of chiaroscuro, of delicate shading, of transparency in shadows, of rich coloring—is represented by two small pictures which depict the inside and outside of a rustic house. Both are full of poetry, notwithstanding the triviality of the subjects which he has chosen in common with other painters of his school. But he has this peculiarity, that the remarkably ugly girls in his pictures are taken from his own family, which, according to tradition, was a group of little monstrosities, whom he held up to the ridicule of the world. Thus nearly all the Dutch painters chose to paint the least handsome of the women whom they saw, as if they had agreed to throw discredit on the feminine type of their country. Rembrandt's

"Susanna," to cite a subject which of all others required beauty, is an ugly Dutch servant, and the women painted by Steen, Brouwer, and others are not worth mentioning. And yet, as we have seen, models of noble and gracious beauty were not wanting among them.

There are three fine paintings by Frans van Mieris the elder, the first disciple of Dou, and as finished and minute a painter as his master. He together with Metsu and Terburg, two artists eminent for finish and coloring, belonged to that group of painters of home-life who chose their subjects from the higher classes of society. One of these canvases portrays the artist with his wife.

Among other paintings, Steen is represented by his favorite subject, a doctor feeling the pulse of a lovesick girl in the presence of her duenna. It is an admirable study of expression, of piquant, roguish smiles. The doctor's face seems to say, "I think I understand;" the invalid's, "Something more than your prescriptions are needed;" the duenna's, "I know what she wants." Other pictures of home-life by Schaleken, Tilborch, Netscher, William van Mieris represent kitchens, shops, dinners, and the families of the artists.

Landscape and marine painting are represented by beautiful gems from the hands of Ruysdael, Berghem, Van de Velde, Van der Neer, Bakhuisen, and Everdingen. There are also a large number of works by

Philips Wouverman, the painter of horses and battle-pieces.

There are two pictures by Van Huysum, the great flower-painter, who was born at a time when Holland was possessed with a mad love of flowers and cultivated the most beautiful flowers in Europe. He celebrated this passion with his brush and created it afresh in his pictures. No one else has so marvellously rendered the infinite shades, the freshness, the transparency, the softness, the grace, the modesty, the languor, the thousand hidden beauties, all the appearances of the noble and delicate life of the pearl of vegetation, of the darling of nature, the flower. The Hollanders brought to him all the miracles of their gardens that he might copy them; kings asked him for flowers; his pictures were sold for sums that in those days were fabulous. Jealous of his wife and his art, he worked alone, unseen by his fellow-artists, lest they should discover the secret of his coloring. Thus he lived and died, glorious and melancholy, in the midst of petals and fragrance.

But the greatest work in the gallery is the celebrated "Lesson in Anatomy" by Rembrandt.

This picture was inspired by a feeling of gratitude to Doctor Tulp, Professor of Anatomy at Amsterdam, who protected Rembrandt in his youth. Rembrandt portrays Tulp and his pupils grouped round a table on which is stretched a naked corpse, whose arm has been dissected by the anatomist's knife. The profes-

sor, who wears his hat, stands pointing out the muscles of the arm with his scissors, and explaining them to his pupils. Some of the scholars are seated, others stand, others lean over the body. The light coming from left to right illuminates their faces and a part of the dead man, leaving their garments, the table, and the walls of the room in obscurity. The figures are life-size.

It is difficult to describe the effect produced by this picture. The first sensation is a feeling of horror and disgust of the corpse. Its forehead is in shadow, its open eyes are turned upward, its mouth half shut as if in amazement; the chest is swollen, its legs and feet are rigid, the flesh is livid and looks as if it would be cold to the touch. In great contrast to this stiffened corpse are the living attitudes of the students, the youthful faces, the bright eyes, intent and full of thought, revealing, in different degrees, eagerness to learn, the joy of comprehension, curiosity, astonishment, the effort of the intellect, the activity of the mind. The face of the master is calm, his eye is serene, and his lips seem smiling with the satisfaction of intimate knowledge of his subject. The whole group is surrounded by an air of gravity, mystery, and scientific solemnity which imposes reverence and silence. The contrast between the light and shade is as marvellous as that between death and life. Everything is painted with infinite pains; it is possible to count the little folds of the ruff, the

wrinkles in the face, the hairs of the beard. It is said that the foreshortening of the corpse is incorrect, and that in some places the finish degenerates into hardness, but universal approval places the "Lesson in Anatomy" among the greatest works of art in the world.

Rembrandt was only twenty-six years old when he painted this picture, which consequently has the mark of his early work. The impetuosity, audacity, and unequalled assurance of his genius, which shine forth in his maturer works, are not yet seen, but his immense power of painting light, his marvellous chiaroscuro, his fascinating magic of contrast, the most original features of his genius, are all to be found here.

However little we may know about art, and however much we may have resolved not to sin by excess of enthusiasm, when we come face to face with Rembrandt van Rijn, we cannot help opening the flood-gates of language, as the Spanish say. Rembrandt exerts an especial fascination. Fra Angelico is a saint, Michelangelo is a giant, Raphael is an angel, Titian a prince, Rembrandt is a spectre. What else can this miller's son be called? Born in a windmill, he arose unexpectedly without a master, without example, without any instruction from the schools, to become a universal painter, who depicted life in every aspect, who painted figures, landscapes, sea-pieces, animals, saints, patriarchs, heroes, monks, riches and

poverty, deformity, decrepitude, the ghetto, taverns, hospitals, and death; who in short, reviewed heaven and earth, and enveloped everything in a light so mysterious that it seems to have issued from his brain. His work is at the same time grand and minute. He is at once an idealist and a realist, a painter and an engraver, who transforms everything and conceals nothing—who changes men into phantoms, the most ordinary scenes of life into mysterious apparitions; I had almost said who changes this world into another that does not seem to be and yet is the same. Whence has he drawn that undefinable light, those flashes of electric rays, those reflections of unknown stars that like an enigma fill us with wonder? What did this dreamer, this visionary, see in the dark? What is the secret that tormented his soul? What did this painter of the air mean to tell us in this eternal conflict of light and shadow? It is said that the contrasts of light and shade corresponded in him to moods of thought. And truly it seems that as Schiller, before beginning a work, felt within himself an indistinct harmony of sounds which were a prelude to his inspiration, so also Rembrandt, when about to paint a picture, beheld a vision of rays and shadows which had some meaning to him before he animated them with his figures. In his paintings there is a life, a dramatic action, quite distinct from that of human figures. Flashes of brilliant light break across a sombre surface like

cries of joy; the frightened darkness flies away, leaving here and there a melancholy twilight, trembling reflections that seem to be lamenting, profound obscurity gloomy and threatening, flashes of dancing sunlight, ambiguous shadows, shadows uncertain and transparent, questionings and sighs, words of a supernatural language like music heard but not understood, which remains in the memory like a dream. Into this atmosphere he plunged his figures, some of them enveloped by the garish light of a theatrical apotheosis, others veiled like ghosts, others revealed by a single ray of light darting across their faces. Whether they be clothed with pomp or in rags, they all are alike strange and fantastic. The outlines are not clear; the figures are loaded with powerful colors, and are painted with such bold strokes of the brush that they stand out in sculpturesque relief, while over all is an expression of impetuosity and of inspiration, that proud, capricious, profound imprint of genius that knows neither restraint nor fear.

After all, every one likes to give his opinion: but who knows, if Rembrandt could read all the pages that have been written to explain the secret meanings of his art, whether he would not burst out laughing? Such is the fate of men of genius: every one holds that he has understood them better than his neighbor, and restores them in his own way. They are like a beautiful theme given by God which men distort into a thousand different meanings—a canvas upon which

the imagination of man paints and embroiders after its own manner.

I left the Hague Gallery with one desire ungratified: I had not found in it any picture by Jerom Bosch, a painter born at Bois-le-Duc in the fifteenth century. This madcap of mischief, this scarecrow of bigots, this artistic sorcerer, had made my flesh creep first in the gallery at Madrid with a work representing a horrible army of living skeletons scattered about an immense space, in conflict with a motley crowd of desperate and confused men and women, whom they were dragging into an abyss where Death awaited them. Only from the diseased imagination of a man alarmed by the terrors of damnation could such an extravagant conception have issued. When you look at it, however long it may be since you were afraid of phantoms, you feel a confused reawakening dread. Such were the subjects of all his pictures—the tortures of the accursed, spectres, fiery chasms, dragons, uncanny birds, loathsome monsters, diabolical kitchens, sinister landscapes. One of these frightful pictures was found in the cell were Philip II. died; others are scattered throughout Spain and Italy. Who was this chimerical painter? How did he live? What strange mania tormented him? No one knows; he passed over the earth wrapped in a cloud, and disappeared like an infernal vision.

On the first floor of the museum there is a "Royal Cabinet of Curiosities," which contains some very

precious historical relics, besides a great number of different objects from China, Japan, and the Dutch colonies. Amongst other things there is the sword of that Ruyter who began life as a rope-maker at Vlissingen, and became the greatest admiral of Holland; Admiral Tromp's cuirass perforated by bullets; a chair from the prison of the venerated Barneveldt; a box containing a lock of hair from the head of that Van Speyk who in 1831, on the Schelde, blew up his vessel to preserve the honor of the Dutch flag. Here, too, is the complete suit of clothes worn by William the Silent when he was assassinated at Delft—the blood-stained shirt, the jacket made of buffalo skin pierced by bullets, the wide trousers, the large felt hat; and in the same glass case are also preserved the bullets and pistols of the assassin and the original copy of his death-warrant.

This modest, almost rough dress, that was worn at the zenith of his power and glory by William, the head of the Republic of the Netherlands, is a noble testimony to the patriarchal simplicity of Dutch manners. There is perhaps no other modern nation, equally prosperous, that has been less given to vanity and pomp. It is related that when the Earl of Leicester, who was commissioned by Queen Elizabeth, arrived in Holland, and when Spinola came to sue for peace in the name of the King of Spain, their magnificence was considered almost infamous. It is further said that the Spanish ambassadors who came to the Hague in 1608

to negotiate the famous truce saw some deputies of the Dutch States seated in a field, meanly clad and breakfasting on a little bread and cheese which they had carried in their saddle-bags. The Grand Pensionary, John De Witt, the adversary of Louis XIV., kept only one servant. Admiral Ruyter lived at Amsterdam in the house of a poor man and swept out his own bedroom.

Another very curious object in the museum is a cabinet which opens in front like a book-case, representing in all its most minute details the inside of a luxurious Amsterdam house at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Czar, Peter the Great, during his stay in Amsterdam, commissioned a rich citizen of that town to make for him this toy house, in order that he might take it back to Russia as a souvenir of Holland. The rich citizen, whose name was Brandt, executed the order like an honest Dutchman, slowly and well. The best cabinet-makers in Holland made the furniture, the cleverest silversmiths the plate, the most accurate printers printed the tiny books, the finest miniature-painters painted the pictures; the linen was prepared in Flanders, the hangings were made at Utrecht. After twenty-five years of work all the rooms were ready. In the nuptial chamber everything was prepared for the confinement of the young mistress; in the dining-room stood a microscopic tea service on a table which was the size of a crown; the picture-gallery, which

was seen through a magnifying glass, was complete; in the kitchen was everything needful to prepare a savory dinner for a group of Liliputians; there was a library, and a cabinet of Chinese objects, birdcages full of birds, prayer-books, carpets, linen for a whole family trimmed with lace and fine embroidery: there were lacking only a married couple, a lady's maid, and a cook rather smaller than ordinary marionettes. But there was one drawback: the house cost a hundred and twenty thousand francs, and the Czar, who as all know, was an economical man, refused it, and Brandt, to shame the imperial avarice, presented it to the Museum of the Hague.

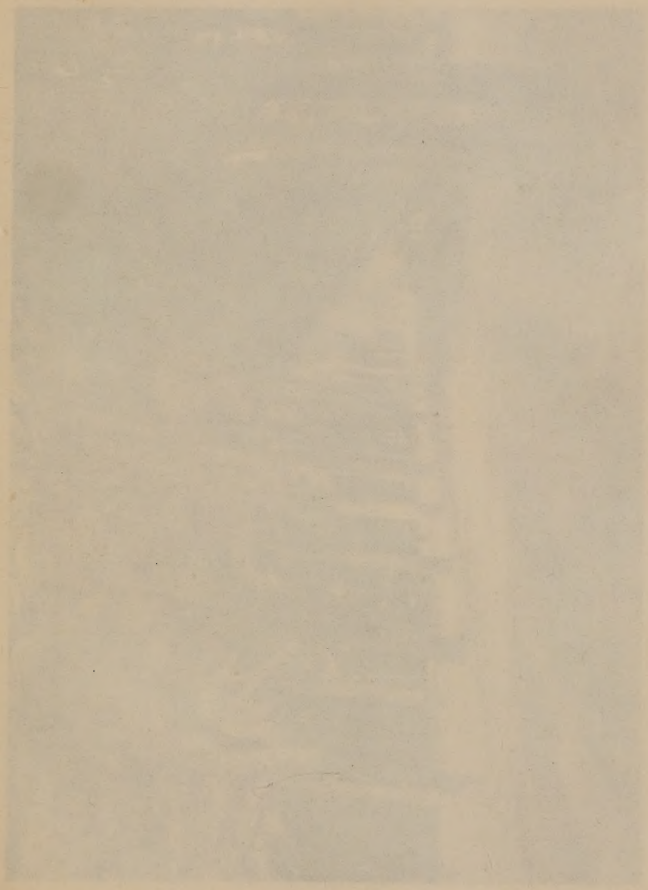
In the streets of the Hague, from the first day, I had met women dressed in such a peculiar manner that I had followed them to observe every particular of their costume. At first sight I thought that they must belong to some religious order or that they were hermits, pilgrims, or women of some nomadic tribes which were passing through Holland. They wore immense straw hats lined with flowered calico, short chocolate-colored monk's cloaks made of serge and lined with red cloth; their petticoats were also of serge, short and puffed out as though they wore crinolines; they wore black stockings and white wooden shoes. In the morning they might be seen going to market bearing on their heads baskets full of fish or driving carts drawn by dogs. They usually went alone or in pairs, without any men.

They walked in a peculiar manner, taking long strides, with a certain air of despondency, like those who are accustomed to walking on the sand; there was a sadness in their expression and appearance which harmonized with the monastic austerity of their attire.

I asked a Dutchman who they were, and the only answer he gave me was, "Go to Scheveningen."

Scheveningen is a village two miles from the Hague, and connected with it by a straight road bordered along its whole length by several rows of beautiful elms, which form a perfect shade. On either side of the road, beyond the elms, there are small villas, pavilions, and cottages with roofs that look like the kiosks of the gardens, and with façades of a thousand fantastic shapes, all bearing the usual inscriptions inviting to repose and pleasure. This road is the favorite promenade of the citizens of the Hague on Sunday evenings, but on the other days of the week it is almost always deserted. One meets only a few women from Scheveningen, and now and then a carriage or the coaches that come and go between the town and the village. As one walks along it seems as though the road must lead to some royal palace surrounded by a large garden or a wide park. The luxuriant vegetation, the shadow and silence, call to mind the forests of Andalusia and Granada. One no longer remembers Scheveningen and forgets that he is in Holland.

When the end of the road is reached the change



On the Road to Scheveningen.

of scene is so sudden that it seems unreal. The vegetation, the shade, the likeness to Granada,—all have disappeared, and one stands in the midst of dunes, sand, and desert; one feels the salt wind blow and hears its dull confused sound. From the summit of one of the dunes one may see the North Sea.

One who has seen only the Mediterranean is impressed by a new and profound feeling at sight of that sea and shore. The beach is formed of very fine, light-colored sand, over which the outermost edges of the waves flow up and down like a carpet which is being continually folded and unfolded. This sandy sea-shore extends to the foot of the first dunes, which are steep, broken, corroded mounds deformed by the eternal beating of the waves. Such is the Dutch coast from the mouth of the Meuse to the Helder. There are no mollusks, no star-fish, no shells or crabs; there is not a single bush or blade of grass. Nothing is seen but sand, waste, and solitude.

The sea is no less mournful than the coast. It corresponds closely to one's ideas of the North Sea, formed by reading about the superstitious terrors of the ancients, who believed it to be driven by eternal winds and peopled by gigantic monsters. Near the shore its color is yellowish, farther out a pale green, and still farther out a dreary blue. The horizon is usually veiled by the mist, which often descends even to the shore and hides all the waters with its thick curtain, which is raised to show only the waves that

come to die on the sand and some shadowy fisherman's boat close to land. The sky is almost always gray, overcast with great clouds which throw dense changeable shadows on the waters: in places these are as black as night, and bring to mind images of tempests and horrible shipwrecks; in other parts the sky is lighted up by patches and wavy streaks of bright light, which seem like motionless lightning or an illumination from mysterious stars. The ceaseless waves gnaw the shore in wild fury, with a prolonged roar which seems like a cry of defiance or the wailing of an infinite crowd. Sea, sky, and earth regard each other gloomily, as though they were three implacable enemies. As one contemplates this scene some great convulsion of nature seems imminent.

The village of Scheveningen is situated on the dunes, which ward off the sea, and hide it so entirely that from the shore nothing is to be seen but the cone-shaped church-steeple rising like an obelisk in the midst of the sand. The village is divided into two parts, one of which is composed of elegant houses representing every kind of Dutch shapes and colors, and built for the use of strangers, with "to let" posted on them in various languages. The other part, in which the natives live, consists of black cottages, little streets, and retreats which foreigners never think of entering.

The population of Scheveningen, which numbers only a few thousands, is almost entirely composed of

fishermen, the greater number of whom are very poor. The village is still one of the principal stations of the herring fishery, where are cured those celebrated fish to which Holland owes her riches and power. But the profits of this industry go to the captains of the fishing vessels, and the men of Scheveningen, who are employed as sailors, hardly earn a livelihood. On the beach, in front of the village, many of those wide staunch boats with a single mast and a large square sail may always be seen ranged in line on the sand one beside the other, like the Greek galleys on the coast of Troy: thus they are safe from the gusts of wind. The flotilla, accompanied by a steam sloop, starts early in June, directing its course toward the Scottish coast. The first herrings taken are at once sent to Holland, and conveyed in a cart ornamented with flags to the king, who in exchange for this present gives five hundred florins. These boats make catches of other fish as well, which are in part sold at auction on the sea-shore, and in part are given to the Scheveningen fishermen, who send their wives to sell them at the Hague market.

Scheveningen, like all the other villages of the coast, Katwijk, Vlaardingen, Maassluis, is a village that has lost its former prosperity in consequence of the decline of the herring fishery, owing, as every one knows, to the competition of England and the disastrous wars. But poverty, instead of weakening the character of this small population, beyond doubt

the most original and poetical in Holland, has strengthened it. The inhabitants of Scheveningen in appearance, character, and habits seem like a foreign tribe in comparison with the people of their own country. They dwell but two miles from a large city, and yet preserve the manners of a primitive people that has always lived in isolation. As they were centuries ago, so are they now. No one leaves their village, and no one who is not a native ever enters it: they intermarry, they speak a language of their own, they all dress in the same style and in the same colors, as did their fathers' fathers. At the time of the fishing only the women and children remain in the village; the men all go to sea. They carry their Bibles with them on their departure. On board they neither drink nor swear nor laugh. When the stormy seas toss their little boats on the crests of the waves, they close all the apertures and await death with resignation. At the same moment their wives are singing psalms, shut in their cottages rocked by the wind and beaten by the rain. Those little dwellings, which have witnessed so many mortal griefs, which have heard the sobs of so many widows, which have seen the sacred joys of happy return and the disconsolate departure of many husbands, with their cleanliness, their white curtains, with the clothes and shirts of the sailors hanging at the windows,— tell of the free and dignified poverty of their inmates. No vagabonds nor fallen women come out of these

homes; no inhabitant of Scheveningen has ever deserted the sea, and none of her daughters has ever refused the hand of a sailor. Both men and women show by their carriage and the expression of their faces a serious dignity that commands respect. They greet you without bending their heads, and look you in the face as much as to say, "We have no need of any one."

In this little village there are two schools, and it is a curious sight to see a swarm of fair-haired children with slates under their arms and pencils in their hands disperse at certain hours among these poverty-stricken streets.

Scheveningen is not only a village famous for the originality of its inhabitants which all foreigners visit and all artists paint. There are, besides, two great bathing establishments, where English, Russians, Germans, and Danes meet in the summer. The flower of the Northern aristocracy, princes and ministers, indeed half the Almanach de Gotha, come here; then there are balls, fantastic illuminations, and fireworks on the sea. The two establishments are placed on the dunes, and at all hours of the day certain carriages which look like gypsy caravans, drawn by strong horses, are driven from the shore into the sea, where they turn round. Whereupon ladies step out from them and bathe in the water, letting their fair hair blow about in the wind. At night the band plays, the visitors walk out, and the

beach is enlivened by an elegant, festive, ever-changing crowd, in which every language is heard and the beauty of every country is represented. A few steps distant from this gayety the misanthrope can find solitude and seclusion on the dunes, where the music faintly strikes his ear like a far-off echo, and the houses of the fishermen show him their lights, directing his thoughts to domestic life and peace.

The first time I went to Scheveningen I took a walk on those dunes which have been so often painted by artists, the only heights on the immense Dutch plain that intercept the view—rebellious children of the sea, whose progress they oppose, being at the same time the prisoners and the guardsmen of Holland. There are three tiers of these dunes, forming a triple bulwark against the ocean: the outer is the most barren, the centre the highest, and the inner the most cultivated. The medium height of these mountains of sand is not greater than fifteen metres, and all together they do not extend into the land for more than a French league. But as there are no higher elevations near or remote, they produce the false impression of a vast mountainous region. The eye sees valleys, gorges, precipices, views that appear distant and are close at hand—the tops of neighboring dunes on which we imagine a man ought to appear as large as a child, and on which instead he seems a giant. Viewed from a height, this region looks like a yellow sea, tempestuous yet motionless. The drear-

iness of this desert is increased by a wild vegetation, which seems like the mourning of the dead and abandoned nature—thin, fragile grass, flowers with almost transparent petals, juniper, sweet-broom, rosemary, through which every now and then skips a rabbit. Neither house, tree, nor human being is to be seen for miles. Now and then ravens, curlews, and sea-gulls fly past. Their cries and the rustling of the shrubs in the wind are the only sounds that break the silence of the solitude. When the sky is black the dead color of the earth assumes a sinister hue, like the fantastic light in which objects appear when seen through colored glass. It is then, when standing alone in the midst of the dunes, that one feels a sense almost of fear, as if one were in an unknown country hopelessly separated from any inhabited land, and one looks anxiously at the misty horizon for the shadow of a building to reassure him.

In the whole of my walk I met but one or two peasants. The Dutch peasants usually speak to the people they meet on the road—a rare thing in a Northern country. Some pull off their caps at the side with a curious gesture, as if they did it for a joke. Usually they say "Good-morning" or "Good-evening" without looking at the person they are greeting. If they meet two people, they say, "Good-evening to you both," or if more than two, "Good-evening to you all." On a pathway in the middle of the first dunes I saw several of those poor fishermen

who spend the whole day up to their waists in water, picking up the shells that are used to make a peculiar cement or to spread over garden-paths instead of sand. It must cost them at least half an hour of hard labor to take off the enormous leather boots that they wear to go into the sea; this would give an excuse to an Italian sailor for swearing by all the saints. But these men, on the contrary, perform the task with a composure that makes one sleepy, without giving way to any movement of impatience, nor would they raise their heads until they had finished even if a cannon were to be fired off.

On the dunes, near a stone obelisk recording the return of William of Orange from England after the fall of the French dominion, I saw for the first time one of those sunsets which awaken in us Italians a feeling of wonder no less than that awakened in people from the North by the sunsets at Naples and Rome. The sun, because of the refraction of light by the mists which always fill the air in Holland, is greatly magnified, and diffuses through the clouds and on the sea a veiled and tremulous splendor like the reflection of a great fire. It seemed as if another sun had unexpectedly appeared on the horizon, and was setting, never again to show itself on earth. A child might well have believed the words of a poet who said, "In Holland the sun dies," and the most cold-blooded man must have allowed a farewell to escape his lips.

As I have spoken of my walk to Scheveningen, I will mention two other pleasant excursions that I made from the Hague last winter.

The first was to the village of Naaldwijk, and from this village to the sea-coast, where they were opening the new Rotterdam canal. At Naaldwijk, thanks to the politeness of an inspector of schools who was with me, I gratified my desire to see an elementary school, and I will state at once that my great expectations were more than realized. The house, built expressly for the school, was a separate building one story in height. We first went into a little vestibule, where there were a number of wooden shoes, which the inspector told me belonged to the pupils, who place them there on their entrance into school and put them on again when they go out. In school the boys wear only stockings which are very thick, consequently their feet do not suffer from cold, especially as the rooms are as hot as if they were a minister's cabinet. On our entrance the pupils stood up and the master advanced toward the inspector. Even that poor village master spoke French, and so we were able to enter into conversation. There were in the school about forty pupils, both boys and girls, who sat on opposite sides of the room; all were fair and fat, with plump, good-natured faces; they had the precocious air of little men and women, which I could not observe without laughing. The building was divided into five rooms, each separated from the other

by a large glass partition, which enclosed all the space like a wall, so that if a master were absent from one class the teacher of the next class could overlook the pupils of his colleague without leaving his post. All the rooms are large and have high windows which reach from the floor to the ceiling, so that it is almost as light inside as it is outside. The benches, walls, floors, windows, and stoves were as clean as if they had been in a ball-room. Having a lively recollection of certain unpleasant places in the schools I attended as a boy, I asked to see the closets, and found them such as few of the best hotels can boast. Afterward on the school-room walls I saw a great many things that I remember to have wished for when I sat at the desks, such as small pictures of landscapes or figures, to which the master referred in his stories and instruction, so that they should be stamped the better on the memory; representations of common objects and animals; geographical maps purposely made with large names and painted in bright colors; proverbs, grammatical rules, and precepts very plainly printed. Only one thing seemed to me lacking—personal cleanliness.

I will not repeat what many have written and some Dutchmen affirm, that in Holland cleanliness of the skin is generally neglected—that the women are dirty, and that the legs of the tables are cleaner than those of the citizens. But it is certain the cleanliness of inanimate objects is infinitely greater than personal

cleanliness, and the deficiency in the last respect is made more apparent by excellence in the first. In an Italian school perhaps those boys might have seemed clean, but, comparing them with the marvellous purity of their surroundings, and reflecting that they were the children of the very women who take half a day to wash the doors and shutters, they seemed to me, and in fact were, rather dirty. In some schools in Switzerland there are lavatories where the boys are obliged to wash upon entering and leaving the school. I should have been pleased to see such lavatories in the Dutch schools too; then all would have been perfect.

I said "that poor master," but I found out afterward that he had a salary of more than two thousand two hundred francs and an apartment in a nice house in the village. In Holland the masters of elementary schools—the principals, that is, for there are assistant masters—never receive less than eight hundred francs a year. This the minimum that the commune can legally give. No commune keeps to this sum, and some masters have the same salaries as our university professors. It is true that it costs more to live in Holland than in Italy, but it is also true that the salaries which seem large to us are there considered small, and yet they propose to increase them. It must also be considered that, owing to the difference of national character, the Dutch masters are not obliged to expend as much of their breath, their

patience, and good-humor as are our Italian masters, which is a consideration if it be true that health counts for something.

From Naaldwijk we went toward the coast. On the road my courteous companion explained to me clearly the point which the question of instruction has reached in Holland. In Latin countries persons when questioned by a stranger answer him with a view toward airing their knowledge and showing their conversational powers. In Holland they try rather to make you understand the subject, and if you do not comprehend directly, they impress it upon you until it is fixed in your mind as clearly and as well as it is in their own.

The question of instruction, in Holland as in most countries, is a religious question, which in its turn is the most serious, indeed the only great, question that now agitates the country.

Of the three and a half millions of inhabitants in Holland, a third, as I have remarked, are Catholics, about a hundred thousand are Jews, and the rest are Protestants. The Catholics, who chiefly inhabit the southern provinces of Limbourg and Brabant, are not divided politically as they are in other countries, but form one solid clerical legion,—Papists, Ultramontanists, the most faithful legion of Rome, as the Dutch themselves say—who buy the very straw that the pontiff is supposed to sleep on, and who thunder Italy from the pulpit and the press. This Catholic

party, which would have no great strength of itself, gains a certain advantage from the fact that the Protestants are divided into a great many religious sects. There are orthodox Calvinists; Protestants who believe in the revelation, but do not accept certain doctrines of the Church; others who deny the divinity of Christ, without, however, separating themselves from the Protestant Church; others, again, who believe in God, but do not believe in any Church; others—and amongst these are many of the cleverest men—who openly profess atheism. In consequence of this state of things, the Catholic party has a natural ally in the Calvinists, who as fervent believers and inflexible conservers of the religion of their fathers, are much less widely separated from the Catholics than from a large party of those of their own co-religionists. These form, in a certain sense, the clerical wing of Protestantism. Hence in the Netherlands there are Catholics and Calvinists on one side, and on the other a liberal party, while between the two there hovers a vacillating legion that does not allow either side to gain an absolute supremacy. The chief point of contention between the extreme sections is the question of primary instruction, and this reduces itself, on the part of the Catholics and Calvinists, to insistence that so-called mixed schools, in which no special religious instruction is given (so that Catholics and Protestants of all doctrines may support them), shall be superseded by

others in which dogmatic instruction is to be given, and that these shall be also supported by the commune under the direction of the state. It is easy to foresee the grave consequences that such a division in the popular educational system would produce—the germs of discord and religious animosity that would be sown, the trouble that would in time arise from separating young people into groups professing different faiths. Up to the present time the principle of mixed schools has prevailed, but the victories of the Liberals have been costly. The Catholics and the Calvinists successively obtained various concessions, and are prepared to obtain yet others. The Catholic party is, in a word, more powerful than the Calvinist party: the one, united and aggressive, gains ground day by day, and it is not unlikely that it will succeed in gaining a victory which, though not lasting, will provoke a violent reaction in the country. Things have come to such a pass that in that very Holland which fought for eighty years against Catholic despotism there are now serious reasons to fear the outbreak of a religious war.

Notwithstanding this state of things, which to the present time has prevented the institution of obligatory instruction demanded by the Liberals, and keeps a great number of Catholic children away from the schools, the education of the lower classes in Holland is in a condition that any European state might envy. In proportion, Holland contains less people who do

Fisherman's Children, Scheveningen.

not know their alphabet than does Prussia. "Of all Europe," as a Dutch writer has said with just pride, although he judges his country severely on other points, "Holland is the land where all such knowledge as is indispensable to civilized man is most widely diffused." I was once greatly surprised, on asking a Dutchman if there were any women-servants who could not read, to hear myself answered, "Well, yes. I remember twenty years ago that my mother had a servant who did not know her alphabet, and we thought it a very strange thing." It is a great satisfaction to a stranger who does not know the language to be sure that if he shows a name on his guide-book to the first street-urchin he meets, the boy will understand it and will try to direct him by gestures.

Talking of Catholics and Calvinists, we arrived at the dunes, and, although we were near the coast, we could not see the ocean. "Holland is a strange country," I said to my friend, "in which everything plays at hide and seek. The façades hide the roofs, the trees hide the houses, the city hides the ships, the banks hide the canals, the mist hides the fields, the dunes hide the sea." "And some day," answered my friend, "the sea will hide everything and all will be ended."

We crossed the downs and advanced toward the coast, where the preparatory works for the opening of the Rotterdam Canal were in progress.

Two dykes, one more than a thousand two hundred meters in length, the other more than two thousand meters long, separated from each other by the space of a kilometer, project into the sea at right angles to the coast. These two dykes, which are built to protect vessels entering the canal, are formed by several rows of enormous palisades made of huge blocks of granite, of fagots, stones, and earth; they are as wide as ten men drawn up in a line. The ocean, which continually washes against them, and at high tide overflows them in many parts, has covered everything,—stones, beams, and fagots, with a stratum of shells as black as ebony, which from a distance seems like a velvet coverlet, giving to these two gigantic bulwarks a severe and magnificent appearance, as if they were a warlike banner unfolded by Holland to celebrate her victory over the waves. At that moment the tide was coming in, and the battle round the extreme end of the dykes was at its height. With what rage did the livid waves avenge themselves for the scorn of those two huge horns of granite that Holland has plunged into the bosom of her enemy! The palisades and the rock foundations were lashed, gnawed, and buffeted on every side; disdainful waters dashed over them and spat upon them with a drizzling rain that hid them like a cloud of dust; then again the waves would flow back like furious writhing serpents. Even the sections far from the struggle were sprinkled by unexpected showers of spray, the advance guard

of that endless army, and meanwhile the water kept rising and advancing, forcing the foremost workmen to retire step by step.

On the longest dyke, not very far from shore, they were planting some piles. Workmen with great labor were raising blocks of granite by means of derricks, and others, in groups of ten or fifteen, were removing old beams to make room for new ones. It was glorious to see the fury of the waves lashing the sides of the dyke, and the impassive calm of the workmen, who seemed almost to despise the sea. It crossed my mind that they must be saying in their hearts, as the sailor said to the monster of the Comprachicos in Victor Hugo's romance: "Roar on, old fellow!" A wind which chilled us to the bone blew the long, fair curls of the good Dutchmen into their eyes, and every now and then threw the spray at their feet or on their clothes—vain provocations to which they did not deign to reply even by a frown.

I saw a pile driven into the dyke. It was the trunk of a great tree pointed at one end and supported by two parallel beams, between which a steam-engine drove an enormous iron hammer up and down. The pile had to be driven through several very thick strata of fagots and stones; yet at every blow from the heavy hammer it sunk into the ground, breaking, tearing, and splintering, while it entered the dyke more than a hand's length, as if it were merely a mud hole. Nevertheless, what with adjusting and

driving the pile, the operation lasted almost an hour. I thought of the thousands that had been driven, of the thousands still to be driven, of the interminable dykes that defend Holland, of the infinite number that have been overturned and rebuilt, and for the first time my mind conceived the grandeur of the undertaking, and a feeling of dismay crept over me as I stood motionless and speechless.

Meanwhile, the waters had risen almost to the level of the dyke, with a sound of panting and breathlessness like tired-out voices that seemed to murmur secrets of distant seas and unknown shores; the wind blew colder, it was growing dark, and I felt a restless desire to withdraw from those front bastions into the interior of the fortress. I pulled the coat-tail of my companion, who had been standing for an hour on a boulder, and we returned to the shore and drank a glass of delicious Schiedam at one of those shops which are called in Dutch "*Come and ask*," where they sell wines, salt meats, cigars, shoes, butter, clothes, biscuits—in fact, a little of everything. Then we started on the road back to the Hague.

My next excursion was the most adventurous that I made in Holland. A very dear friend of mine who lived at the Hague invited me to go and dine with him at the house of one of his relatives who had shown a courteous desire to make my acquaintance. I asked where his relative lived, and he an-

swered, "Far from the Hague." I asked in what direction, but he would not tell me; he told me to meet him at the railway-station the next day, and left me. On the next morning we met at the station: my friend bought tickets for Leyden. When we arrived at Leyden we alighted, but, instead of entering the town, we took a road across country. I besought my companion to reveal the secret to me. He answered that he could not do so, and as I knew that when a Dutchman does not mean to tell you anything, no power on earth will make him do it, I resigned myself. It was a disagreeable day in February; there was no snow, but a strong cold wind was blowing which soon made our faces purple. As it was Sunday, the country was deserted. We went on and on, passing windmills, canals, meadows, houses half hidden by trees, with very high roofs of stubble mixed with moss. Finally we arrived at a village. The Dutch villages are closed by a palisade: we passed through the gate, but not a living soul was to be seen; the doors were shut, the window curtains were drawn, and not a voice, nor a footstep, nor a breath was heard. We crossed the village, and paused in front of a church which was all covered with ivy like a summer-house; looking through an aperture in the door, we saw a Protestant clergyman with a white cravat preaching to some peasants whose faces were striped with gold, green, and purple, the reflection of the

stained-glass windows. We passed through a clean street paved with bricks, and saw stakes put for the storks' nests, posts planted by the peasants for the cows to rub against, fences painted sky blue, small houses with many-colored tiles forming letters and words, ponds full of boats, bridges, kiosks for unknown uses, little churches with great gilded cocks on the top of their steeples; and not a living soul near or far: still we went on. The sky cleared a little, then darkened again; here the sunshine gleamed on a canal, there it made a house sparkle or gilded a distant steeple. Then again it hid itself, reappeared, and so on with a thousand coquetries, while on the horizon there appeared oblique lines denoting rain. We began to meet countrywomen with circles of gold round their heads, on which veils were fastened, the whole surmounted by hats; these were trimmed with bunches of flowers and wide fluttering ribbons. We also met some country carriages of the antique Louis XV. style, with a gilded box ornamented with carved work and mirrors, peasants with thick black clothes and large wooden shoes, children with stockings of every color in the rainbow. We arrived at another village, which was clean, shining, and brightly colored, with its streets paved with bricks and its windows adorned with curtains and flowers. Here we took a carriage and went on our way. A fine icy rain which penetrated to our bones began to fall as soon as we started. Muf-

fled up in the wet frozen covers, we reached the bank of a large canal. A man came out of a cottage, led the horse on to a barge, and landed us safe and sound on the opposite bank. The carriage turned down a wide street, and we found ourselves on the bed of the ancient Sea of Haarlem. Our horse trotted along where the fish once swam through the water; our coachman smoked where at one time the smoke of naval battles had rolled; we saw glimpses of canals, of villages, of cultivated fields, of a new world of which only thirty years ago there had not been a trace. After we had driven about a mile the rain stopped, and it began to snow as I had never seen it snow before: it was a real whirlwind of heavy, thick snow, which the strong wind blew into our faces. We unfolded the waterproof covering, opened our umbrellas, tucked ourselves in, and bundled ourselves up, but the wind broke through all our defences and the snow sifted over us, enveloping us in white and covering our heads and feet with ice. After a long turn we left the lake; the snow ceased, we arrived at another village of toy houses, where we left our carriage and proceeded on foot. We went on and on, seeing bridges, windmills, closed cottages, lonely streets, wide meadows, but no human beings. We crossed another branch of the Rhine, and arrived at another village barricaded and silent; we continued on our way, occasionally seeing some face looking at us from behind the windows. We then left the vil-

lage and found ourselves opposite the dunes. The sky looked threatening, and I became alarmed.

"Where are we going?" I demanded of my friend.

"Where fortune takes us," he replied.

We proceeded through the dunes, along narrow, winding, sandy roads, seeing no sign of habitation anywhere; we went up hill and down dale; the wind drove the sand into our faces; at every step our feet sank in it, and the country grew more and more desolate, gloomy, and foreboding.

"But who is your relative?" I said to my companion. "Where does he live? what is his business? There is some witchcraft about this; he cannot be a man like other men: tell me where you are leading me."

My friend did not answer: he stopped and stared in front of him. I stared too, and far away saw something that looked like a house, alone in the midst of the desert, almost hidden by a rise in the ground. We hastened on; the house seemed to appear and disappear like a shadow. Round about we saw stakes which looked like gibbets. My friend tried to persuade me that they were only stakes for storks' nests. We were about a hundred feet away from the house. Along a wall we saw a wooden pipe which seemed bathed in blood, but my friend assured me it was only red paint. It was a little house enclosed by a paling; the doors and windows were shut.

"Don't go in," I said. "There is yet time.

There is something uncanny in that house; take care what you are doing. Look up; I have never seen such a black sky."

My friend did not hear me; he pressed on courageously, and I followed. Instead of going toward the door, he took a short cut. Behind us we heard a ferocious barking of dogs. We broke into a run, crossed a thicket of underbrush, jumped over a low wall, and knocked at a little door.

"There is yet time!" I exclaimed.

"It is too late," answered my friend.

The door opened, but nobody was to be seen. We mounted a winding staircase and entered a room. Oh pleasant surprise! The hermit, the sorcerer, was a merry, courteous young man, and the diabolical house was a villa full of comfort and warmth, sparkling with light, the dwelling of a sybarite—a real fairy palace to which our host retired some months in the year to study and to make experiments on the fertilization of the dunes. How delightful it was to look at the cold desert without through a window draped with curtains and decorated with flower-pots! We went into the dining-room and sat down at a table glittering with silver and glass, in the midst of which, surrounded by gilded and blazoned bottles, was a hot dinner fit for a prince. The snow was beating against the windows, the sea was moaning, the wind blew furiously round the house, which seemed like a ship in a terrible storm. We drank

to the fertilization of the dunes, to the victors of Achen, to the prosperity of the colonies, to the memory of Nino Bixio, to the elves. Nevertheless, I was still a little uneasy. Our host when he needed the servant touched a hidden spring; to tell the coachman to get the carriage ready he spoke some words into a hole in the wall; and these tricks did not please me.

"Tell me," I said, "tell me that this house really exists; promise me that it is not all a joke and that it will not disappear, leaving nothing but a hole in the ground and a smell of sulphur in the air. Assure me that you say your prayers every evening."

I cannot describe the laughter, the merriment, the absurd speeches that succeeded each other until the middle of the night, accompanied by the clinking of glasses and the roaring of the tempest. At last the moment of departure arrived: we went down and were rolled away in a roomy carriage which dashed rapidly across the desert. The ground was covered with snow, the dunes were outlined in white on the dark sky, the carriage glided noiselessly in the midst of strange indistinct forms, which succeeded each other rapidly in the light of the lantern and seemed to melt into each other. In that vast solitude a dead silence reigned which robbed us of speech. After a time we began to see dwellings and arrived at a village. We crossed two or three deserted streets, with snow-covered houses on either side, with a few lighted

windows showing human shadows. At last we came to a railway-station, and reached the Hague in a few minutes, although we had been deluded to think we had taken a long journey and crossed an imaginary country. Must I tell the truth? If I were asked to swear at the moment I am writing that the house in the midst of the dunes was a reality, I should request ten minutes for reflection. It is true that the master was polite enough to come and bid me good-bye at the station the day I left the Hague, and that when I saw him clearly by daylight he did not seem to have anything strange about him; but we all know the various forms, the simulations, the thousand arts which a certain gentleman and his servants assume.

At last I saw a Dutch winter, not as I had hoped to see it on leaving Italy, for it was very mild; but still Holland was presented to me as we are in the habit of picturing it to ourselves in the south of Europe.

Early in the morning the first thing that attracts the eye in the silent white streets is the print of innumerable wooden shoes left in the snow by the boys on their way to school, and so large are the wooden shoes that they look like the tracks of elephants. These footsteps generally go in a straight line, showing that the boys take the shortest cut to school, and, like steady, zealous Dutchmen, do not play and lose time on the road. One can see long rows of children

wrapped up in large scarfs, with their heads half hidden between their shoulders—little bundles arm in arm, walking two by two, or three by three, or pressed together in groups like a bunch of asparagus, out of which peep only the tips of their noses and the ends of books. When the boys have disappeared the streets are deserted for a short time, for the Dutch do not rise early, especially in the winter. One can walk some distance without meeting any one or hearing any sound. The snow seems whiter surrounding those rose-colored houses, which have all their projections outlined with a pure white line, and the wooden heads outside of the shops wear white cotton wigs; the chains of the railings look like ermine; everything presents a strange appearance. When it freezes and the sun shines, the façades seem covered with silver sparks, the ice heaped upon the banks of the canals shines with all the colors of the rainbow, and the trees glitter with thousands of little pearls, like the plants in the enchanted gardens of the Arabian Nights. It is then that it is beautiful to walk in the forest at the Hague at sunset, treading on the hardened snow, which crackles under one's feet like powdered marble, in the avenues of large, white, leafless beech trees, which look like one gigantic crystallization, and cast blue and violet shadows, dotted with myriads of points which glisten like diamonds in the paths dyed pink by the setting sun. But nothing compares with the sight of the Dutch

country seen from the top of a steeple at morning after a heavy fall of snow. Beneath the gray and lowering sky one looks over that vast white plain, from which, roads, houses, and canals have disappeared, and nothing is seen but elevations and depressions, which, like the folds of a sheet, give a vague idea of the forms of hidden houses. The boundless white is unstained save by the clouds of smoke that rise almost timidly from the distant dwellings, as if to assure the spectator that beneath the desert of snow human hearts are still beating.

It is impossible to speak of the winter in Holland without mentioning what constitutes the originality and the attraction of winter life in that country—the skating.

Skating in Holland is not only a recreation; it is the ordinary means of transportation. To cite a well-known example, all know the value of it to the Dutch in the memorable defence of Haarlem. When there is a hard frost the canals are transformed into streets, and sabots tipped with iron take the place of boats. The peasants skate to market, the workmen to their work, the small tradespeople to their business; entire families skate from the country to the town with their bags and baskets on their shoulders or drive in sledges. Skating to them is as habitual and easy as walking, and they skim along so rapidly that one can scarcely follow them with the eye. In past years bets were commonly made between the

In Holland there are two different schools of skating, the so-called Dutch school and the Frieslander school, each of which uses a peculiar kind of skate. The Frieslander school, which is the older, aims only at speed; the Dutch school cultivates grace as well. The Frieslanders are stiff in their motions; they throw their bodies forward, and hold themselves very straight, looking as though they were starched, and keeping their eyes fixed on the goal. The Dutch skate with a zigzag movement, swaying from left to right and from right to left with an undulating motion of the body. The Frieslander is an arrow, the Dutchman a rocket.

The women prefer the Dutch school. The ladies of Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and the Hague are, in fact, the most fascinating skaters in the Netherlands. They begin to skate as children, continue as girls and wives, reaching the height of beauty and the summit of art at the same time, while their skates strike out sparks from the ice which kindle many fires. It is only on the ice that Dutch women appear light-heeled. Some attain a marvellous perfection. Those who have seen them say that it is impossible to imagine the grace of movement, the bows, the glides, the thousand pretty delicate arts that are displayed. They fly and return like swallows and butterflies, and in this exercise they grow animated and their placid beauty is transformed. But all are not so skilled: many dare not show themselves in

public, for those who would be considered prodigies with us are scarcely noticed there, to such perfection has the art been carried. The men, too, perform all kinds of tricks and feats, some writing words of love and fantastic figures in their twirls, others making rapid pirouettes, then gliding backward on one leg for a long distance; others twist about, making numbers of dizzy turns in a small space, sometimes bending down, then leaning to one side, then skating upright or crouching like india-rubber figures moved by a secret spring.

The first day that the canals and small docks are covered with ice strong enough to bear the skaters is a day of rejoicing in the Dutch towns. Skaters who have made the experiment at break of day spread the news abroad; the papers announce it; groups of boys about the streets burst into shouts of delight; men and women-servants ask permission to go out with the determined air of people who have decided to rebel if refused; old ladies forget their age and ailments and hurry off to the canal to emulate their friends and daughters. At the Hague the basin, which is in the middle of the city, near to the Binnenhof, is invaded by a mingling crowd of people, who interlace, knock against each other, and form a confused giddy mass. The flower of the aristocracy skates on a pond in the middle of the wood, and there in the snow may be seen a winding and whirling maze of officers, ladies, deputies, students, old

men, and boys, among whom the crown prince is sometimes to be seen. Thousands of spectators crowd around the scene, music enlivens the festival, and the enormous disk of the Dutch sun at sunset sends its dazzling salutation through the gigantic beech trees.

When the snow is packed hard the turn of the sleigh comes. Every family has a sleigh, and at the hour the world goes out walking they appear by hundreds. They fly past in long rows two or three abreast. Some are shaped like shells, others like swans, dragons, boats, or chariots. All are gilded and painted in various colors; the horses which draw them are covered with handsome furs and magnificent trappings, their heads ornamented with plumes and tassels, and their harness studded with glittering buttons. In the sleighs sit ladies clothed in sable, beaver, and blue fox. The horses toss their heads, enveloped in a cloud of steam which rises from them, while their manes are covered with ice-drops. The sleighs dart along, the snow flying about them like silver foam. The splendid uncurbed procession passes and disappears like a silent whirlwind over a field of lilies and jessamine. At night, when the torches are lit, thousands of small flames follow each other and flit about the silent town, casting lurid flashes of light on the ice and snow, the whole scene appearing to the imagination like a great diabolical battle over which the spectre of Philip II. presides from the top of the Binnenhof Tower.

Main Drive in the Bosch, The Hague.

But, alas! everything changes, even the winter, and with it the art of skating and the use of sleighs. For many years the severe winters of Holland have been followed by such mild ones that not only the large rivers, but even the small canals in the towns, do not freeze. In consequence the skaters who have been so long out of practice do not risk giving public exhibitions when the occasion presents itself; and so, little by little, their number becomes smaller, and the women especially are forgetting the art.

Last winter they hardly skated at all, and this winter there has not been a race, and not even a sleigh has been seen. Let us hope that this deplorable state of affairs will not last, and that winter will return to caress Holland with its icy bear's paw, and that the fine art of skating will once more arise with its mantle of snow and its crown of icicles. Let me announce meanwhile the publication of a work called "Skating," upon which a Dutch legislator has been employed for many years—a work that will be the history, the epic, and code of this art, from which all European skaters, male and female, will be able to draw instruction and inspiration.

While I remained at the Hague I frequented the principal club in the town, composed of more than two thousand members. It is located in a palace near the Binnenhof, and there it was that I made my observations upon the Dutch character.

The library, the dining-room, and the card-room,

the large drawing-room for conversation, and the reading-room were as full as they could be from four o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. Here one met artists, professors, merchants, deputies, clerks, and officers. The greater number come to drink a small glass of gin before dinner, and return later to take another comforting sip of their favorite liquor. Nearly all converse, and yet one hears only a light murmur, so that if one's eyes were shut one would say that about half of the actual number was present. One can go round the rooms many times without seeing a gesture of excitement or hearing a loud voice: at a distance of ten steps from the groups one would not know that any one was speaking, except by the movement of his lips. One sees many corpulent gentlemen with broad, clean-shaven faces and bearded throats, who talk without raising their eyes from the table or lifting their hands from their glasses. It is very rare to see among these heavy faces a lively, piquant physiognomy like that of Erasmus, which many consider the true Dutch type, though I am not of their opinion.

The friend who opened the door of the club to me presented me to several of its habitués. The difference between the Dutch and the Italian character is especially evident in introductions. On one occasion I noticed that the person to whom I was introduced scarcely bowed his head, and then remained silent some moments. I thought my reverend face had not

pleased him, and felt an echo of cordial dislike in my heart. In a little while the person who had introduced me went away, leaving me tête-à-tête with my enemy. "Now," thought I, "I will burst before I will speak a word to him." But my neighbor, after some minutes of silence, said to me with the greatest gravity, "I hope, if you have no other engagement to-day, you will do me the honor of dining with me." I fell from the clouds. We then dined together, and my Amphytrion placidly filled the table with bottles of Bordeaux and champagne, and did not let me depart until I had promised to dine with him again. Others, when I would ask information about various things, would hardly answer me, as if they were trying to show me that I was troublesome, so that I would say to myself, "How contemptible they are!" But the next day they would send me all the details neatly and clearly written out, and minute in a higher degree than I desired. One evening I asked a gentleman to point out to me something in that ocean of figures that goes by the name of *Guide to European Railways*. For some moments he did not answer, and I felt mortified. Then he took the book, put on his spectacles, turned over the leaves, read, took notes, added and subtracted for half an hour, and when he had finished he gave me the written answer, putting his spectacles back into their case without speaking a word.

Many of those with whom I passed the evening used to go home at ten o'clock to work, and to return to the club at half-past eleven, after which they would remain until one o'clock. When they had said, "I must go," there was no possibility of changing their minds. As the clock struck ten they left the door; at half-past eleven they stepped over the threshold. It is not surprising that with this chronometrical precision they find time to do so many things, without doing anything in haste; even those who do not depend on their studies for their livelihood have read entire libraries. There is no English, German, or French book, however unimportant, with which they are unacquainted. French literature especially they have at their fingers' ends. And what is said of literature can be said with more reason of politics. Holland is one of the European countries in which the greatest number of foreign papers are to be found, particularly those that deal principally with national affairs. The country is small and peaceful, and the news of the day is soon exhausted; consequently it frequently happens that after ten minutes the conversation has passed beyond the Rhine and deals with Europe. I remember the astonishment with which I heard the fall of the ministry of Scialoia and other Italian matters discussed as if they were domestic affairs.

One of my first cares was to sound the religious sentiment of the people, and here I found, to my

surprise, great confusion. As a learned Dutchman most justly wrote a short time ago, "Ideas subversive of every religious dogma have made much way in this land." It is quite a mistake, however, to believe that where faith decreases indifference enters. Such men as appeared to Pascal monstrous creatures —men who live without giving any thought to religion, of whom there are numbers in our country— do not exist in Holland. The religious question, which in Italy is merely a question, in Holland is a battle in which all brandish their arms. In every class of society, men and women, young and old, occupy themselves with theology and read or listen to the disputes of the doctors, besides devouring a prodigious number of polemical writings on religion. This tendency of the country is shown even in Parliament, where the deputies often confute their opponents with biblical quotations read in Hebrew, or translated and commentated, the discussion degenerating into very disquisitions on theology. All these conflicts, however, take place in the mind rather than in the heart; they are devoid of passion, and one proof of this is that Holland, which of all the countries in Europe is divided into most sects, is also the country in which these sects live in the greatest harmony and where there is the greatest degree of tolerance. If this were not the case, the Catholic party would not have made such strides as it has made, protected from the first by the Liberals against

the only intolerant party in the country, the orthodox Calvinists.

I did not make the acquaintance of any Calvinists, and I was sorry on that account. I never believed all that is recounted of their extreme rigour; for example, that there are among them certain ladies who hide the legs of the tables with covers, for fear that they might suggest to the minds of visitors the legs of the mistress of the house. But there is no doubt that they live with extreme austerity. Many of them never enter a theatre, a ball-room, or a concert-hall. There are families who on the Sabbath content themselves with eating a little cold meat, so that the cook may rest on that day. Every morning in many houses the master reads from the Bible in the presence of the family and servants, and they all pray together. But, nevertheless, this sect of orthodox Calvinists, whose followers are almost all amongst the aristocracy and the peasantry, does not exert a great influence in the country. This is proved by the fact that in Parliament the Calvinists are inferior in numbers to the Catholic party and can do nothing without them.

I have mentioned the theatre. At the Hague, as in the other large Dutch cities, there are no large theatres nor great performances. They generally produce German operas sung by foreign singers, and French comedies and operettas. Concerts are the great attraction. In this Holland is faithful to its tradi-

tions, for, as is well known, Dutch musicians were sought after in all the Christian courts as early as the sixteenth century. It has also been said that the Dutch have great ability in singing in chorus. In fact, the pleasure of singing together must be great if it is in proportion to the aversion they have to singing alone, for I do not ever remember hearing any one sing a tune at any hour or in any part of a Dutch town, excepting street urchins, who were singing in derision at drunken men, and drunkards are seldom seen excepting on public holidays.

I have spoken of the French operettas and comedies. At the Hague not only the plays are French, but public life as well. Rotterdam has an English imprint, Amsterdam is German, and the Hague Parisian. So it may truthfully be said that the citizens of the large Dutch towns unite and temper the good qualities and the defects of the three great neighboring nations. At the Hague in many families of the best society they speak French altogether; in others they affect French expressions, as is done in some of the northern towns of Italy. Addresses on letters are generally written in French, and there is a small branch of society, as is frequently the case in small countries, that professes a certain contempt for the national language, literature, and art, and courts an adopted country beyond the Meuse and the Rhine. The sympathies, however, are divided. The elegant class inclines toward France, the learned class toward

Germany, and the mercantile class toward England. The zeal for France grew cold after the Commune. Against Germany a secret animosity has arisen, generated by the fear that in her acquisitive tastes she might turn toward Holland. This feeling still ferments, though it is tempered by community of interest against clerical Catholicism.

When it is said that the Hague is partly a French city, it must be understood that this relates to its appearance only; at bottom the Dutch characteristics predominate. Although it is a rich, elegant, and gay city, it is not a city of riot and dissipation, full of duels and scandals. The life is more varied and lively than that found in other Dutch towns, but not less peaceful. The duels that take place in the Hague in ten years may be counted on the five fingers of one's hand, and the aggressor in the few that take place is usually an officer. Notwithstanding, to show how powerful in Holland is this "ferocious prejudice that honor dwells on the point of the sword," I recall a discussion between several Dutchmen which was raised by a question of mine. When I asked whether public opinion in Holland was hostile to duels, they answered all together, "Exceedingly hostile." But when I wanted to know whether a young man in good society who did not accept a challenge would be universally praised, and would still be treated and respected as before—whether, in short, he would be supported by public opinion so

that he would not repent his conduct—then they all began discussing. Some weakly answered, "Yes;" others resolutely, "No." But the general opinion was on the negative side. Hence I concluded that although there are few duels in Holland, this does not arise, as I thought, from a universal and absolute contempt for the "ferocious prejudice," but rather from the rarity of the cases in which two citizens allow themselves to be carried by passion to the point of having recourse to arms; which is a result of nature rather than of education. In public controversies and private discussions, however violent, personal insults are very rare, and in parliamentary battles, which are sometimes very vigorous, the deputies are often exceedingly impertinent, but they always speak calmly and without clamor. But this impertinence consists in the fact rather than in the word, and wounds in silence.

In the conversations at the club I was astonished at first to note that no one spoke for the pleasure of speaking. When any one opened his mouth it was to ask a question or to tell a piece of news or to make an observation. That art of making a period of every idea, a story of every fact, a question of every trifle, in which Italians, French, and Spaniards are masters, is here totally unknown. Dutch conversation is not an exchange of sounds, but a commerce of facts, and nobody makes the least effort to appear learned, eloquent, or witty. In all the time

I was at the Hague I remember hearing only one witticism, and that from a deputy, who speaking to me of the alliance of the ancient Batavians with the Romans, said, "We have always been the friends of constituted authority." Yet the Dutch language lends itself to puns: in proof of this there is the incident of a pretty foreign lady who asked a young boatman of the *trekschuit* for a cushion, and not pronouncing the word well, instead of cushion said kiss, which in Dutch sounds almost the same; and she scarcely had time to explain the mistake, for the boatman had already wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. I had read that the Dutch are avaricious and selfish, and that they have a habit of boring people with long accounts of their ailments, but as I studied the Dutch character I came to see that these charges are untrue. On the contrary, they laugh at the Germans for their complaining disposition. To sustain the charge of avarice somebody has brought forward the very incredible statement that during a naval battle with the English the officers of the Dutch fleet boarded the vessels of the enemy, who had used all their ammunition, sold them balls and powder at exorbitant prices, after which they continued the battle. But to contradict this accusation there is the fact of their comfortable life, of their rich houses, of the large sums of money spent in books and pictures, and still more of the widespread works of charity, in which the Dutch people

certainly stand first in Europe. These philanthropic works are not official nor do they receive any impulse from the government; they are spontaneous and voluntary, and are carried on by large and powerful societies that have founded innumerable institutes—schools, prizes, libraries, popular reunions—helping and anticipating the government in the duty of public instruction,—whose branches extend from the large cities to the humblest villages, embracing every religious sect, every age, every profession, and every need; in short, a beneficence which does not leave in Holland a poor person without a roof or a workman without work. All writers who have studied Holland agree in saying that there probably is not another state in Europe where, in proportion to the population, a larger amount is given in charity by the wealthy classes to those who are in want.

It must not, however, be imagined that the Dutch people have no defects. They certainly have them, if one may consider as defects the lack of those qualities which ought to be the splendor and nobility of their virtues. In their firmness we might find some obstinacy, in their honesty a certain sordidness; we might hold that their coldness shows the absence of that spontaneity of feeling without which it seems impossible that there can be affection, generosity, and true greatness of soul. But the better one knows them, the more one hesitates to pronounce these judgments, and the more one feels for them a grow-

ing respect and sympathy on leaving Holland. Voltaire was able to speak the famous words: "Adieu, canaux, canards, canaille;" but when he had to judge Holland seriously, he remembered that he had not found in its capital "an idle person, a poor, dissipated, or insolent man," and that he had everywhere seen "industry and modesty." Louis Napoleon proclaimed that in no other European country is there found so much innate good sense, justice, and reason as there is in Holland; Descartes gave the Hollanders the greatest praise a philosopher can give to a people when he said that in no country does one enjoy greater liberty than in Holland; Charles V. pronounced upon them the highest eulogy possible to a sovereign when he said that they were "excellent subjects, but the worst of slaves." An Englishman wrote that the Dutch inspire an esteem that never becomes affection. Perhaps he did not esteem them highly enough.

I do not conceal the fact that one of my reasons for liking them was the discovery that Italy is much better known in Holland than I should have dared to hope. Not only did our revolution find a favorable echo there, as was natural in a independent nation free and hostile to the pope, but the Italian leaders and the events of recent times are as familiarly known as those of France and Germany. The best newspapers have Italian correspondents and furnish the public with the minutest details of our affairs.

In many places portraits of our most illustrious citizens are seen. Acquaintance with our literature is no less extended than knowledge of our politics. Putting aside the fact that the Italian language was sung in the halls of the ancient counts of Holland, that in the golden age of Dutch literature it was greatly honored by men of letters, and that several of the most illustrious poets of that period wrote Italian verses or imitated our pastoral poetry,—the Italian language is considerably studied nowadays, and one frequently meets those who speak it, and it is common to see our books on ladies' tables. The "Divina Commedia," which came into vogue especially after 1830, has been twice translated into rhymed triplets. One version is the work of a certain Hacke van Mijnden, who devoted all his life to the study of Dante. "Gerusalemme Liberata" has been translated in verse by a Protestant clergyman called Ten Kate, and there was another version, unpublished and now lost, by Maria Tesseeschade, the great poetess of the seventeenth century, the intimate friend of the great Dutch poet Vondel, who advised and helped her in the translation. Of the "Pastor Fido" there are at least five translations by different hands. Of "Aminta" there are several translations, and, to make a leap, at least four of "Mie Prigioni," besides a very fine translation of the "Promessi Sposi," a novel that few Dutch people have not read either in their own language, in French, or in Italian.

To cite another interesting fact, there is a poem entitled "Florence," written for the last centenary of Dante by one of the best Dutch poets of our day.

It is now in place to say something about Dutch literature.

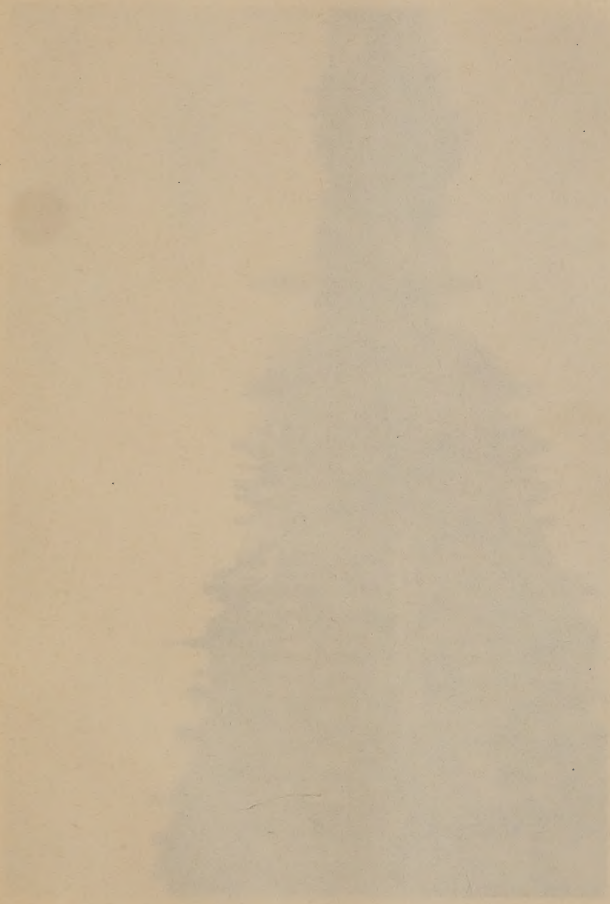
Holland presents a singular disproportion between the expansive force of its political, scientific, and commercial life and that of its literary life. While the work of the Dutch in every other field extends beyond the frontier of the land, its literature is confined within its own borders. It is especially strange that, although Holland possesses a most abundant literature, it has not, as other little states, produced one book that has become European, unless we class among literary works the writings of Spinoza, the only great philosopher of his country, or consider as Dutch literature the forgotten Latin treatises of Erasmus of Rotterdam. Yet if there be a country which by its nature and history suggests subjects to inspire the mind to the production of such poetical works as appeal to the imagination of all nations, that country is Holland. The marvellous transformations of the land, the terrible inundations, the fabulous maritime expeditions,—these ought to have given birth to a poem powerful and original even when stripped of its native form. Why did not this occur? The nature of the Dutch genius may be adduced as a reason, which, aiming at utility in everything, wished to turn literature also to a practical end.

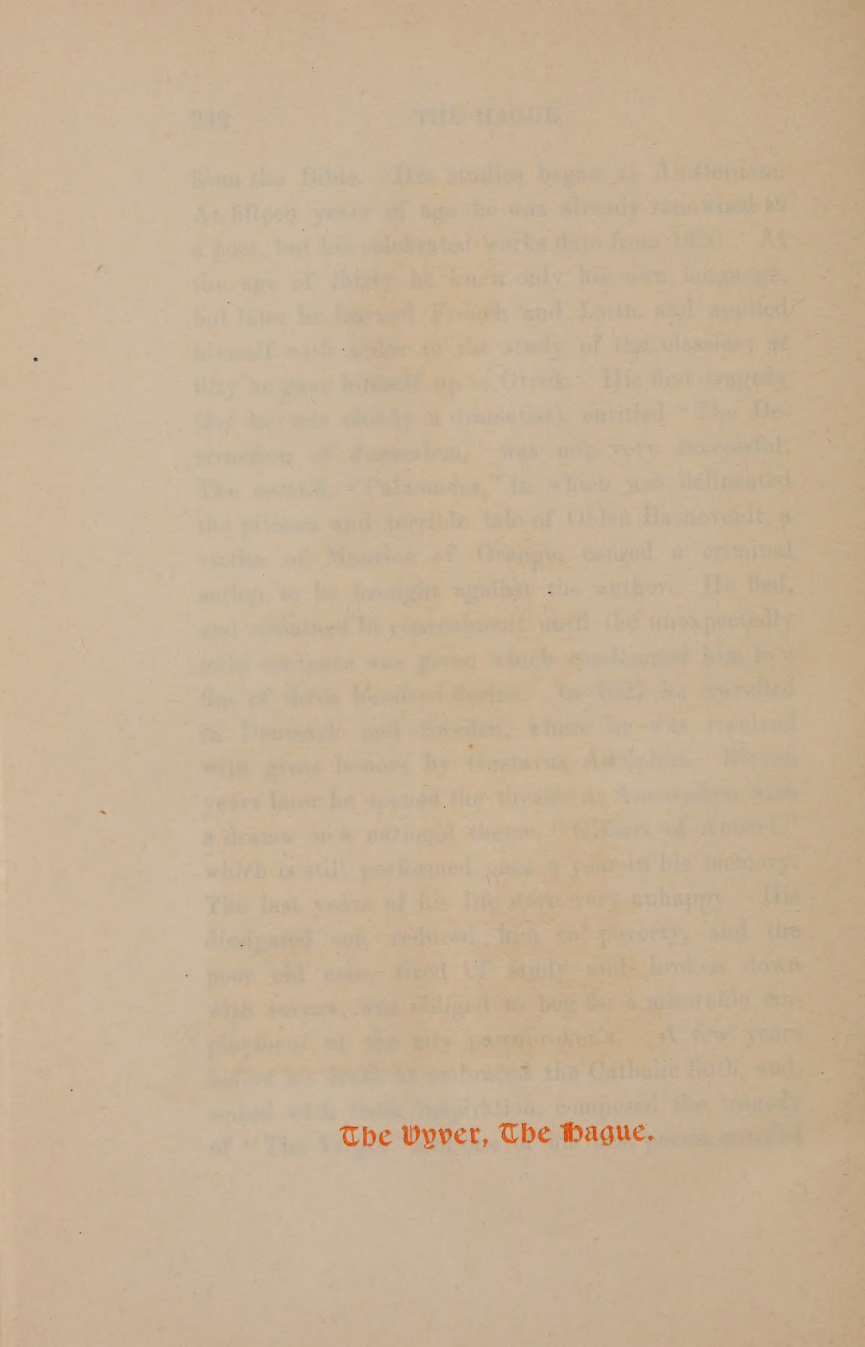
Another tendency, the opposite of this, though perhaps derived from it, is that of soaring high above human nature to avoid treading on the ground with the mass; a weariness of genius which gave to judgment the ascendency over the imagination; an innate love of all that was precise and finished, which resulted in a prolixity in which grand ideas were diluted; the spirit of the religious sects, which enchained within a narrow circle talents created to survey a vast horizon. But neither these nor other reasons can keep one from wondering that there should not be one writer of Dutch literature who worthily represents to the world the greatness of his country—a name to be placed between Rembrandt and Spinoza.

However, it would be a mistake to overlook at least the three principal figures of Dutch literature, two of whom belong to the seventeenth and one to the nineteenth century—three original poets who differ widely from each other, but represent in themselves Dutch poetry in its entirety: Vondel, Catz, and Bilderdijk.

Vondel, the greatest poet Holland has produced, was born in 1587 at Cologne, where his father, a hat-maker, had taken refuge, having fled from Antwerp to escape from the Spanish persecutions. While still a child the future poet returned to his country on a barrow, together with his father and mother, who followed him on foot, praying and reciting verses

from the Bible. His studies began at Amsterdam. At fifteen years of age he was already renowned as a poet, but his celebrated works date from 1620. At the age of thirty he knew only his own language, but later he learned French and Latin, and applied himself with ardor to the study of the classics; at fifty he gave himself up to Greek. His first tragedy (for he was chiefly a dramatist), entitled "The Destruction of Jerusalem," was not very successful. The second, "Palamades," in which was delineated the piteous and terrible tale of Olden Barneveldt, a victim of Maurice of Orange, caused a criminal action to be brought against the author. He fled, and remained in concealment until the unexpectedly mild sentence was given which condemned him to a fine of three hundred florins. In 1627 he travelled in Denmark and Sweden, where he was received with great honors by Gustavus Adolphus. Eleven years later he opened the theatre at Amsterdam with a drama on a national theme, "Gilbert of Amstel," which is still performed once a year in his memory. The last years of his life were very unhappy. His dissipated son reduced him to poverty, and the poor old man, tired of study and broken down with sorrow, was obliged to beg for a miserable employment at the city pawnbroker's. A few years before his death he embraced the Catholic faith, and, seized with fresh inspiration, composed the tragedy of "The Virgin" and one of his best poems entitled




The Vyver, The Hague.

"The Mysteries of the Altar." He died at a great age, and was buried in a church at Amsterdam, where a century afterward a monument was erected in his honor. Besides tragedies he wrote martial songs to his country, to illustrious Dutch sailors, and to Prince Frederick Henry. But his chief glory was the drama. An admirer of Greek tragedy, he preserved the unities, the chorus, the supernatural, substituting Providence for Destiny, and demons and angels (the good and evil spirits of Christianity) for the angry and propitious gods. He drew nearly all his subjects from the Bible. His finest work is the tragedy of "Lucifer," which, notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties of stage setting, was represented twice at the theatre in Amsterdam, after which it was interdicted by the Protestant clergy. The subject of the drama is the rebellion of Lucifer, and the characters are the good and bad angels. In this as in his other plays there abound fantastic descriptions full of splendid imagery, passages of powerful eloquence, fine choruses, vigorous thought, solemn phrases, rich and sonorous verse, while here and there are gleams and flashes of genius. On the other hand, his work is pervaded by a mysticism which is sometimes obscure and austere, by a discord between Christian ideas and pagan forms. The lyrical element predominates over the dramatic, good taste is often offended, and, above all, the thought and feeling, though aiming at the sublime, rise too

high above this earth, and elude the comprehension of the human heart and mind. Nevertheless, historical precedence, originality, ardent patriotism, and a noble and patient life have made Vondel a great and venerated name in his country, where he is regarded as the personification of national genius, and is placed in the enthusiasm of affection next to the first poets of other lands.

Vondel is the greatest, Jacob Catz is the truest, personification of Dutch genius. He is not only the most popular poet of his nation, but his popularity is such that it may be affirmed that there is no other writer of any land, not excluding even Cervantes in Spain and Manzoni in Italy, who is more generally known and more constantly read, while at the same time there is perhaps no other poet in the world whose popularity is more necessarily limited to the boundaries of his own country. Jacob Catz was born in 1577 of a noble family in Brouwershaven, a town of Zealand. He studied law, became pensionary of Middelburg, went as ambassador to England, was Grand Pensionary of Holland, and, while he performed the duties of these offices with zeal and rectitude, he devotedly cultivated poetry. In the evening, after he had transacted affairs of state with the deputies of the provinces, he would retire to his home to write verses. At seventy-five years of age he asked to be released from further service, and when the stadtholder told him with appreciative

words that his request had been granted, he fell on his knees in the presence of the Assembly of the States and thanked God, who had always protected him during the course of his long and exacting political life. A few days later he retired to one of his villas, where he enjoyed a peaceful and honorable old age, studying and writing up to the year 1660, when he died, in the eighty-first year of his life, mourned by all Holland. His poems fill several large volumes, and consist of fables, madrigals, stories from history and mythology, abounding in descriptions, quotations, sentences, and precepts. His work is pervaded with goodness, honesty, and sweetness, and he writes with frank simplicity and delicate humor. His volume is the book of national wisdom, the second Bible of the Dutch nation—a manual which teaches how to live honestly and in peace. He has a word for all—for boys as well as old men, for merchants as well as princes, for mistresses as well as for maids, for the rich as well as for the poor. He teaches how to spend, to save, to do housework, to govern a family, and to educate children. He is at the same time a friend, a father, a spiritual director, a master, an economist, a doctor, and a lawyer. He loves modest nature, the gardens, the meadows; he adores his wife, does his work, and is satisfied with himself and with other people, and would like every one to be as contented as he is. His poems are to be found beside the Bible in

every Dutch house. There is not a peasant's cottage where the head of the family does not read some of his verses every evening. In days of sadness and doubt all look for comfort and find it in their old poet. He is the intimate fireside friend, the faithful companion of the invalid; his is the first book over which the faces of affianced lovers bend; his verses are the first that children lisp and the last that grandsires repeat. No poet is so loved as he. Every Dutchman smiles when he hears his name spoken, and no foreigner who has been in Holland can help naming it with a feeling of sympathy and respect.

The last of the three, Bilderdijk, was born in 1756 and died in 1831: his was one of the most marvellous intellects that have ever appeared in this world. He was a poet, historian, philologist, astronomer, chemist, doctor, theologian, antiquary, jurisconsult, designer, engraver—a restless, unsettled, capricious man, whose life was nothing but an investigation, a transformation, a perpetual battle with his vast genius. As a young man, when he was already famous as a poet, he abandoned the Muse and entered politics; he emigrated with the stadtholder to England, and gave lessons in London to earn a livelihood. He tired of England and went to Germany; bored by German romanticism, he returned to Holland, where Louis Bonaparte overwhelmed him with favors. When Louis left the throne, Napoleon the Great deprived the favorite of his pension, and he was reduced to

poverty. Finally he obtained a small pension from the government, and continued studying, writing, and struggling to the last day of his life. His works embrace more than thirty volumes of science, art, and literature. He tried every style, and succeeded in all excepting the dramatic. He enlarged historical criticism by writing one of the finest national histories his country possesses. He wrote a poem, "The Primitive World," an abstruse, gloomy composition which is very much admired in Holland. He dealt with every possible question, confounding luminous truths with the strangest paradoxes. He even raised the national literature, which had fallen into decadence, and left a phalanx of chosen disciples who followed in his steps in politics, art, and philosophy. Holland regards him not only with enthusiasm, but with fanaticism, and there is no doubt that after Vondel he is the greatest poet of his country. But he was possessed by a religious frenzy, a blind hatred of new ideas, which caused him to make poetry an instrument of sects: he introduces theology into everything, and consequently he could not attain to that free serene region beyond which genius cannot obtain enduring victories and universal fame.

Round these three poets, who represent the three vices of Dutch literature—of losing themselves in the clouds, of creeping on the ground, of entangling themselves in the meshes of mysticism—are grouped

a number of epic, comic, satiric, and lyric poets, most of whom flourished in the seventeenth and a few in the eighteenth century. Many of them are renowned in Holland, but none possesses sufficient originality to attract the attention of the passing stranger.

The present condition deserves a rapid glance. Criticism by stripping from Dutch history the veil of poetry with which the patriotism of writers had clothed it, has placed it on the wider and more productive plain of justice. Philological studies are held in high honor in Holland, and almost all the sciences are represented by men of European fame. These are facts of which no scholar is ignorant, and a bare mention of them is sufficient.

In pure literature the most flourishing style is the novel. Holland has had its national novelist, its Walter Scott, in Van Lennep, who died a few years ago, a writer of historical romances which were received with enthusiasm by all classes of society. He was an effective painter of customs, a learned, witty writer, and a master of the art of dialogue and description, but, unfortunately, often prolix. He used old artifices, adopted forced solutions, and often was not sufficiently reticent. In his last book, "The Adventures of Nicoletta Zevenster," while admirably describing Dutch society at the beginning of this century, he had the unheard-of audacity to describe an improper house at the Hague. All Holland was in

an uproar. His book was discussed, criticised, condemned, praised to the skies, and the battle still continues. Other historical novels were written by a certain Schimmel, a worthy rival of Van Lennep, and by a Madame Rosboon Toussaint, an accomplished author of deep study and real talent. Nevertheless, historical romance may be considered dead even in Holland. The modern novels of social life and the story meet with better fortune. Most prominent in this field is Beets, a Protestant clergyman and a poet, the author of a celebrated book entitled "The Dark Chamber." Koetsweldt is another of this class, and there are also some young men of great gifts who have been prevented from rising to any height by haste, the demon that persecutes the literature of to-day.

Holland has still another kind of romance which is its own. It might be called Indian romance, since it describes the habits and life of the people of the colonies. Of late years several novels have been published in this style, which have been received in the country with great applause and have been translated into several languages. Among these is the "Beau Monde of Batavia," by Professor Ten Brink, a learned, and brilliant writer, of whom I should like to be able to speak at length to attest in some degree my gratitude and admiration. But *apropos* of Indian romances, it is pleasant to notice how in Holland at every step one hears and sees something that reminds

one of the colonies, as if a ray of the Indian sun penetrated the Dutch winter and colored the life. The ships which bring a breath of wind from those distant lands to the home ports, the birds, the flowers, the countless objects, like sounds mingled with faint music, call up in the mind images of another nature and another race. In the cities of Holland, among the thousands of white faces, one often meets men whose visages are bronzed by the sun, who have been born or have lived for many years in the colonies—merchants who speak with unusual vivacity of dark women, bananas, palm forests, and of lakes shaded by vines and orchids; young men who are bold enough to risk their lives amid the savages of the islands of Borneo and Sumatra; men of science and men of letters; officers who speak of the tribes which worship fish, of ambassadors who carry the heads of the vanquished dangling from their girdles, of bull and tiger fights, of the frenzy of opium-eaters, of the multitudes baptized with pomp, of a thousand strange and wonderful incidents which produce a singular effect when related by the phlegmatic people of this peaceful country.

Poetry, after it lost Da Costa, a disciple of Bilderdijk, a religious poet and enthusiast, and Genestet, a satirical poet who died very young, had few champions in the last generation, and these are now silent or sing with enfeebled voice. The stage is in a worse condition. The untrained, ranting Dutch actors

usually appear only in French or German dramas, comedies which are badly translated, and the best society does not go to see them. Writers of great talent, like Hofdijk, Schimmel, and Van Lennep, wrote comedies which were admirable in many ways, but they never became popular enough to hold the stage. Tragedy is in no better condition than comedy and the drama.

From what I have said it would appear that there is not at present any great literary movement in Holland; but on the contrary, there is great literary activity. The number of books published is incredible, and it is marvellous with what avidity they are read. Every town, every religious sect, every society, has its review or newspaper. Besides this, there is a multitude of foreign books: English novels are in the hands of all; French works of eight, ten, and twenty volumes are translated into the national language. This is the more remarkable in a country where all cultivated people can read the originals, and it proves how customary it is not only to read, but to buy, although books are a great deal more expensive in Holland than elsewhere. But this superabundance of publications and this thirst for reading are precisely those elements which are injuring literature. Writers, in order to satisfy the impatient curiosity of the public, write in too great haste, and the mania for foreign literature smothers and corrupts the national genius. Nevertheless, Dutch literature has still a just claim

to the esteem of the country: it has declined, but has not become perverted; it has preserved its innocence and freshness; what is lacking in imagination, originality, and brilliancy is compensated by wisdom, by the severe respect for good manners and good taste, by loving solicitude for the poorer classes, by the effective energy with which it advances charity and civil education. The literatures of other lands are great plants adorned with fragrant flowers; Dutch literature is a little tree laden with fruit.

On the morning when I left the Hague, after my second visit to the city, some of my good friends accompanied me to the railway-station. It was raining. When we were in the waiting-room, before the train started, I thanked my kind hosts for the courteous reception they had given me, and, knowing that perhaps I should never see them again, I could not help expressing my gratitude in sad and affectionate words, to which they listened in silence. Only one interrupted me by advising me to guard against the damp.

"I hope at least some of you will come to Italy," I continued, "if only to give me the opportunity of showing my gratitude. Do promise me this, so that I may feel a little consoled at my departure. I will not leave if some one does not say he will come to Italy."

They looked into each other's faces, and one answered laconically, "Perhaps." Another advised me

not to change French gold in the shops. At that moment the last bell rang.

"Well, then, good-bye," I said in an agitated voice, pressing their hands. "Farewell: I shall never forget the glorious days passed at the Hague; I shall always recall your names as the dearest remembrance of my journey. Think of me sometimes."

"Good-bye," they all answered in the same tone, as if they were expecting to see me the next day. I leaped into the railway-carriage stricken at heart, and looked out of the window until the train started, and saw them all standing there, motionless, silent with impassive faces, their eyes fixed on mine. I waved a last farewell, and they responded with a slight bend of the head, and then disappeared from my sight for ever. Whenever I think of them I see them just as they were when I left them, in the same attitude, with their serious faces and fixed eyes, and the affection that I feel for them has in it something of austerity and sadness like their native sky on the day when I last beheld them.

THE END OF VOLUME I.

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